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August 2004

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Raymond Herrera

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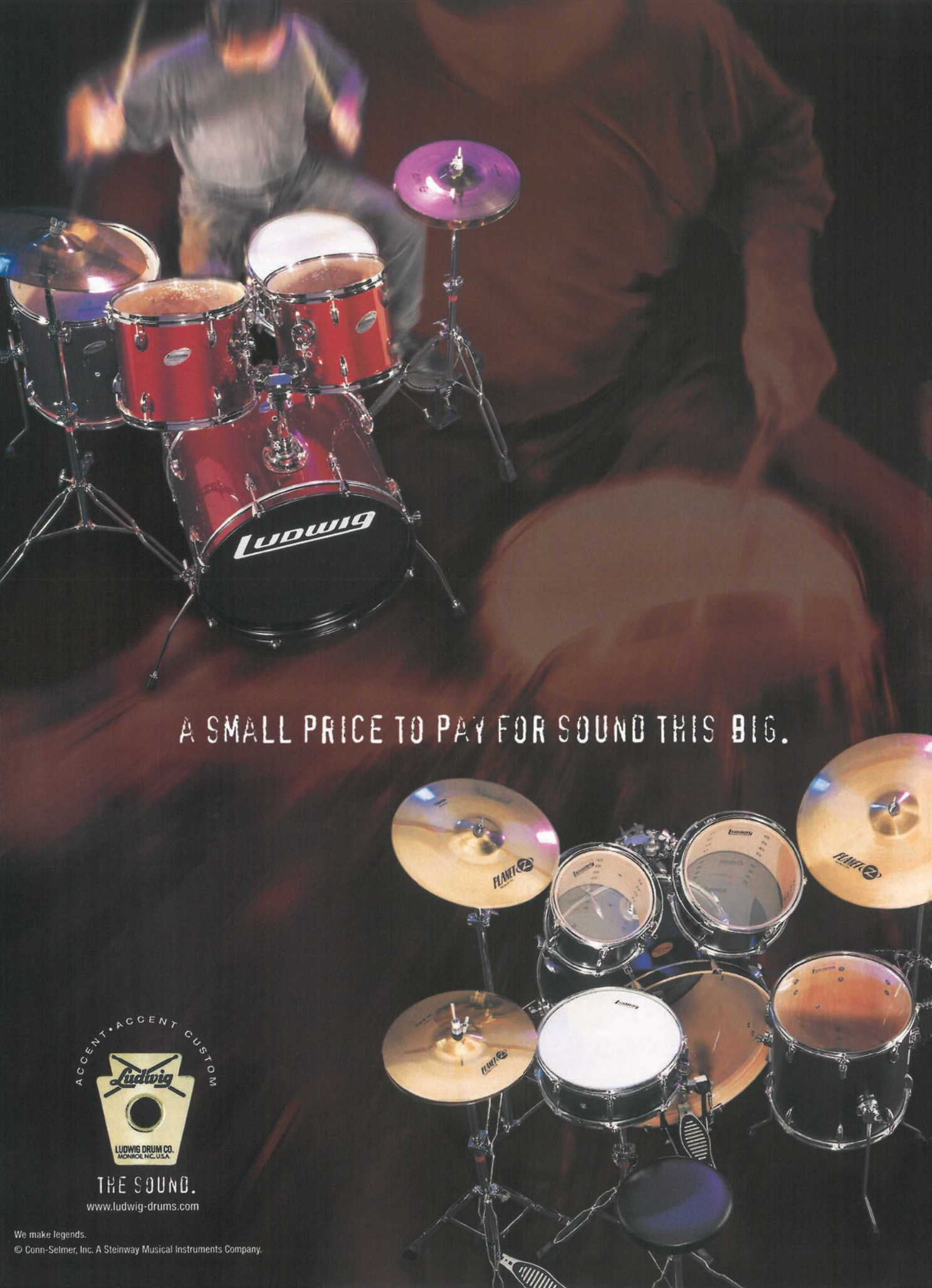
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AN **EDITOR'S** OVERVIEW

Life Changes

This is the first opportunity I've had to check in with you since Ron Spagnardi, the publisher and founder of *Modern Drummer*, passed away last September. As you might expect, we here at *MD* were rocked by such a huge loss. Ron accomplished so much in his life, including creating this monumental publication. But on a personal level, he created a wonderfully close-knit family atmosphere here among the staff.

I won't lie to you: For a couple of months after Ron's death, all of us were having trouble staying positive. Besides being an incredibly talented man, Ron was our "father" and the spiritual core of this publication. The sense of loss was deep.

Well, after a rough period, I'm happy to report that our spirits here at *MD* are on the rise. While it's still hard to believe that Ron is gone, it seems that *all* of us are re-energized. That initial sadness has been replaced by a determination to continue to produce the best possible drumming publication on the planet. And thanks to Ron's wife, Isabel, we're not only feeling good about the future of this publication—we're *excited* about it.

Over the past few issues, you may have noticed some subtle changes in the look of the publication (a new column design, larger photos, a more "open" feel to the layouts). And we have bigger surprises yet to come. But while moving forward is important, we're not forgetting where we've come from. We'll be continuing Ron's philosophy of *packing* every issue with the most relevant, practical, and inspiring drumming info available anywhere.

I had originally written more about the bright future here at *MD*, but just as we went to press we learned of the passing of Elvin Jones. Such terrible news.

It's hard to imagine a world without Elvin's incredible spirit. We join with the rest of the drumming community in mourning the loss of this jazz titan. Our October issue will present a major tribute to him.

Rest in peace, Elvin.

Bill Miller

Elvin Jones

1927-2004

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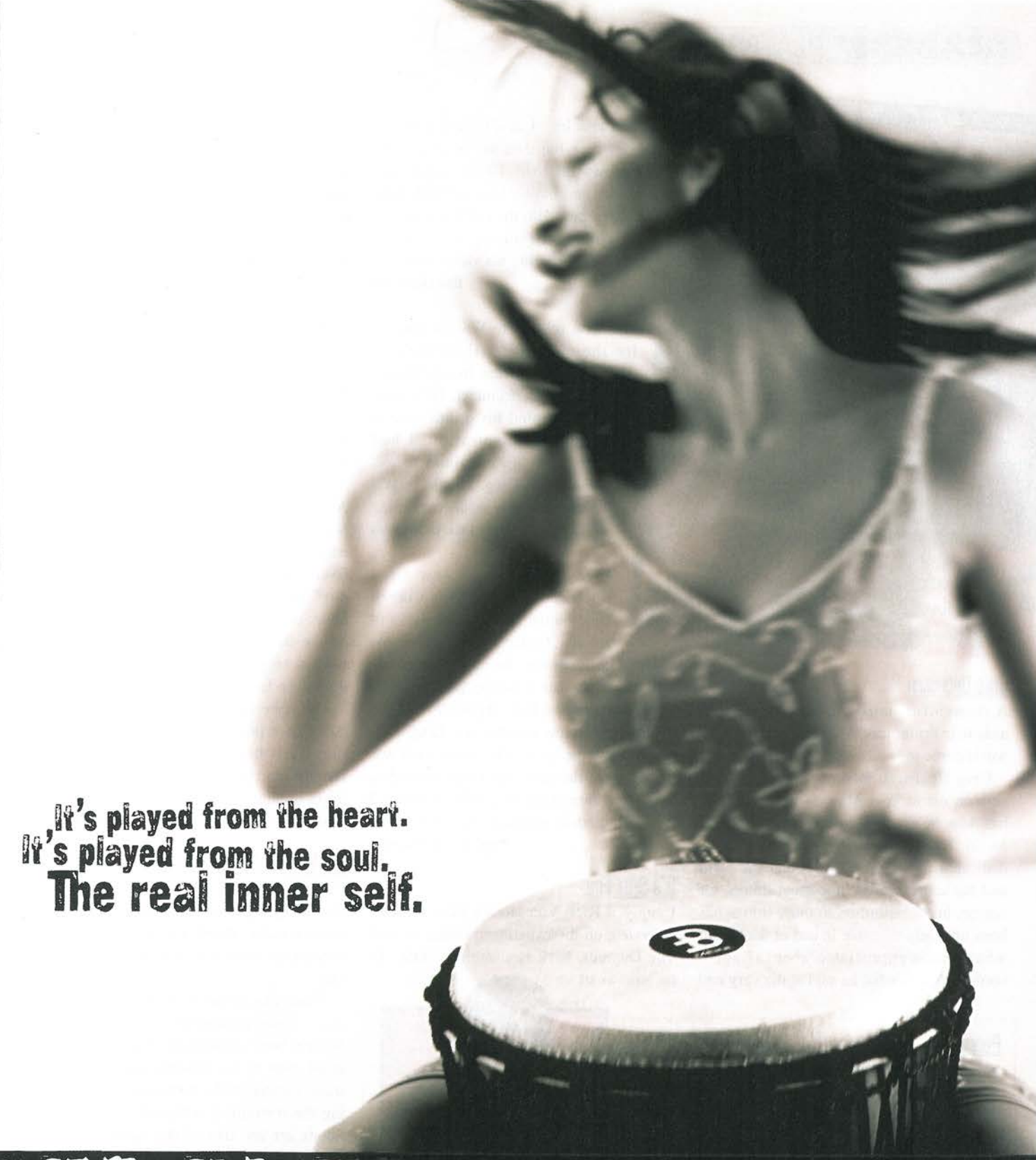

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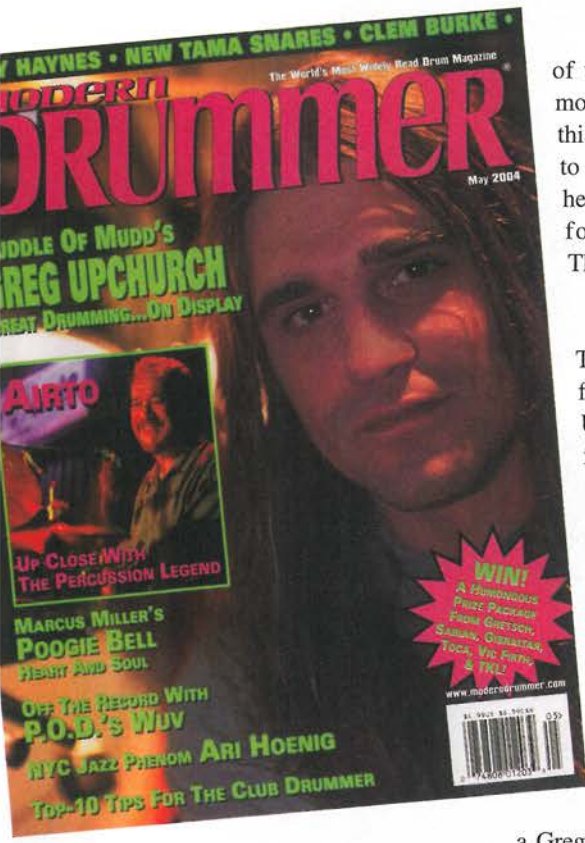


Greg Upchurch

A thoughtful, musically educated, and articulate drummer? What has the pop/rock world come to?

Greg Upchurch made as big an impression on me in your May cover story as he has done behind the drums with Puddle Of Mudd. He's obviously a savvy guy who's dedicated to the proposition that the band and the songs are the important things. Of course, his contribution to those things has been uniquely valuable in and of itself. But what I most appreciated about Gregg's comments was what he said at the very end of the article: "I don't want a ton of money now but then not be able to do this down the road. I want to continue to work and have a long career." Now here's a guy with the right perspective for young drummers to emulate. Thanks for sharing his views with us.

Bill Waldrop

Thanks a million to Waleed Rashidi for the awesome article on Greg Upchurch. It's great to see Greg's first cover as a drummer. He's mesmerizing behind his drums, and is my personal inspiration. I had emailed *MD* several times to ask for a story on Greg. Thanks to you all for making my wish come true.

Lisa D'Andrea

A few years ago I saw Greg Upchurch with the Chris Cornell band on the first and last shows of their tour. On the first show I became a Greg Upchurch fan. He had an awesome hard rock style. But I got the feeling that he was holding back a little. By the time of the closing show a few months later, Greg completely blew me away. The entire band was tighter from the tour, but Greg seemed to have gone through his own little evolution. I love seeing artists genuinely having fun with their music.

Paul David Petrillo

It's Still Fun

I enjoyed Rick Van Horn's May *Editor's Overview* on his experience sitting in with The Duprees. Rick is absolutely right: To be able to sit in with any band—especially an act like The Duprees—is about the biggest thrill a drummer can have. Having to sit and wait around for such a long period, then having to hurry a meal in order to start on time—that's an adrenaline roller coaster, and I for one can appreciate it. Rick described a thirteen-hour workday that any drummer would love to do. It sure as heck beats working at some factory or corporate office where you're never appreciated.

Rick's articles, as well as Adam Budofsky's, make reading *Modern Drummer* magazine a thrill. And that's because it's great to read stories that are true to life!

Dave Betti

As a drummer who has lived what Rick Van Horn so vividly described in his May editorial, I can attest to this simple truth: Even though it's hard for most "work-a-day" folks to comprehend, nine or ten hours of "hurry up and wait" are justified by the fact that when the waiting is over, we get to play *music*. And on our own drums, no less.

The style is irrelevant, and the "stage" could be a pool table or the floor over by the dart board. It doesn't matter. Drumming can change you in ways you never dreamed of. So yes, Rick, the dream is alive, and it *is* still fun.

Marc White

The Whole May Issue

I'd like to express my sincere appreciation for the high quality of the May 2004 *MD*. I found it to be one of your more substantive issues ever—and I've subscribed since day one.

There was no fat at all in this issue. But there were a number of articles that I thought were particularly relevant to folks at all ends of the musical and skills spectrum. Poogie Bell's comments about playing the instrument musically, in whatever idiom, are the crux of the matter for most of us. Bobby Borg's piece on what to look for when negotiating compensation begs a future article or two, with perhaps contract drafts or a checklist of issues to address before going out.

The Chuck Burgi interview and Jeff Schaller's *Club Scene* article both emphasized the importance of getting along with the people you work with,

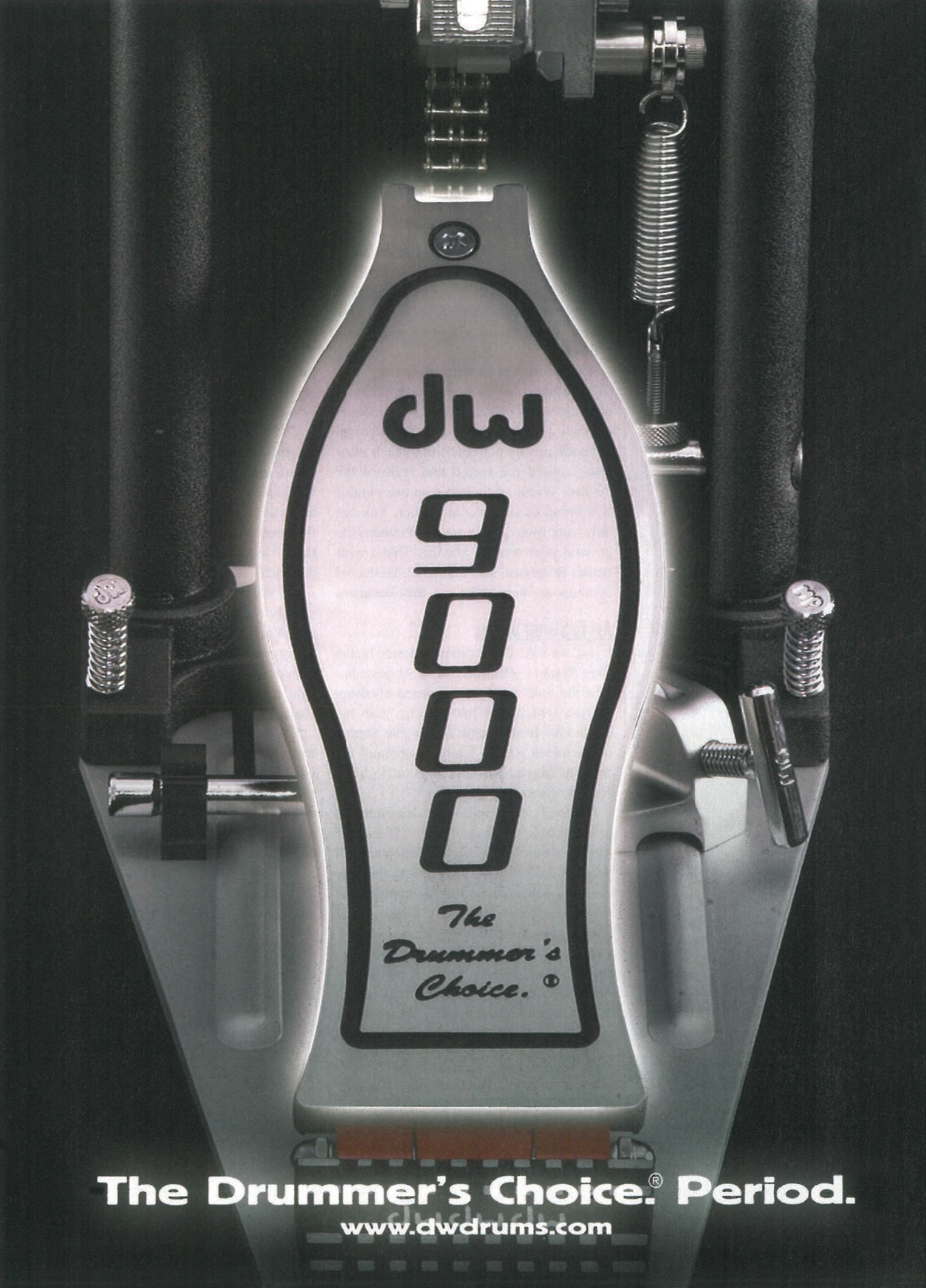
Poogie Bell

I want to thank Robin Tolleson for his May interview with Poogie Bell. Poogie has quite the history. Geez, while I was mustering the courage to sit in with local bands, his musical father was telling none other than Rahsaan Roland Kirk, "My son is a drummer. Can he sit in?" Ouch—that's deep water!

Poogie's insight into the drummer's role was both refreshing and inspirational. I first heard his name at the end of one of my Marcus Miller CDs. Marcus is closing the show with introductions of the group, and says, "Poogie Bell on the drums, ladies and gentlemen, *Poogie Bell*," to much well-deserved applause (including my own).

I will reread Robin's interview with Poogie from time to time, just to check myself. I mean, jazz/funkster Poogie Bell making an analogy of "They loved Parliament-Funkadelic, but they also loved Willie Nelson." How cool is *that*?

Timothy Lee Cromer



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while Rick Van Horn's editorial illustrated how the joy of playing can and should overcome the hassles involved. Congratulations on a great piece of work. **Nick Costa**

Review Rebuttal

My name is Erik Hargrove. I play drums for James Brown, and I'm also a Bosphorus cymbal endorser. I was very disappointed to read Robin Tolleson's May review of Bosphorus's New Orleans Series cymbals.

Among other comments, Robin says that "The lathing markings are different from one ring to the other." Bosphorus produces cymbals completely by hand. The fact that the markings do not conform to each other goes toward the sound and style of the cymbal. Within each series, no one cymbal will sound exactly like any other. You can have your own distinct sound of cymbals to go with your style of playing. That's what makes Bosphorus the best hand-hammered cymbals out there today. **Erik Hargrove**

Aid To Station Victims

I just read Al Prudhomme's letter in the May *Readers' Platform*. In it, Al describes how the folks at Mapex replaced his drum throne, which was lost—along with his entire kit—in the tragic fire at The Station nightclub in Rhode Island. I applaud the folks at Mapex for reaching out to help. Now how about the rest of us?

Hundreds of people were devastated in unimaginable ways by that fire. If each of *Modern Drummer*'s quarter million readers donated a mere five dollars (less than the cost of a pair of sticks) to the families and survivors, we would make a significant contribution on behalf of drummer/musicians everywhere. Donations can be sent to the Station Family Fund Web site at www.stationfamilyfund.org. Let's follow Mapex's lead and reach out. **Dave Heim**

Kudos To Craigie

I recently returned a defective 12" A brilliant splash cymbal to Zildjian. Along with the warranty card, I included a letter that said, in effect, that this cymbal should never have left the factory, and that I should not have to be the quality control monitor for their products.

With businesses these days looking only at the bottom line, I was amazed when the assistant to the president of the Avedis Zildjian Company called and inquired about the situation. She said that Zildjian president and CEO Craigie Zildjian was personally concerned about the matter and would be following up.

The replacement cymbal arrived that afternoon. But it was not a 12" brilliant splash like the one I had returned. It was a traditional 12". I called the next morning and told the assistant that I was done with this problem. I came away thinking, "Well, they tried...but it's business as usual in America." So you can imagine how floored I was when Craigie Zildjian herself called shortly thereafter and apologized for the mistakes. She told me that procedures were being examined so that this sort of thing would not happen in the future. She also sent me a 12" A brilliant splash at no charge.

For the president of a major music-industry corporation to call about an $80 cymbal is simply astounding. To take the time to talk to me—at best a whacker on the drums—is simply not done. To replace the cymbal on her dime is also not done. But, apparently, at Zildjian it *is* done.

My son, who is the real drummer in this house, has insisted on using Zildjians since he began playing. Now I know why. I also know why Zildjian has remained in business for over 380 years. Kudos to Craigie Zildjian for taking the time out of her busy schedule to help a "little guy." **Pete Shivers**

OOPS!

In the June *Readers' Platform*, Roxy Petrucci's Web site was listed incorrectly. The correct address is www.roxypetrucci.com.

In that same issue's "Great Gear" feature, Ludwig's phone number was shown incorrectly. The correct number is (574) 522-1675.

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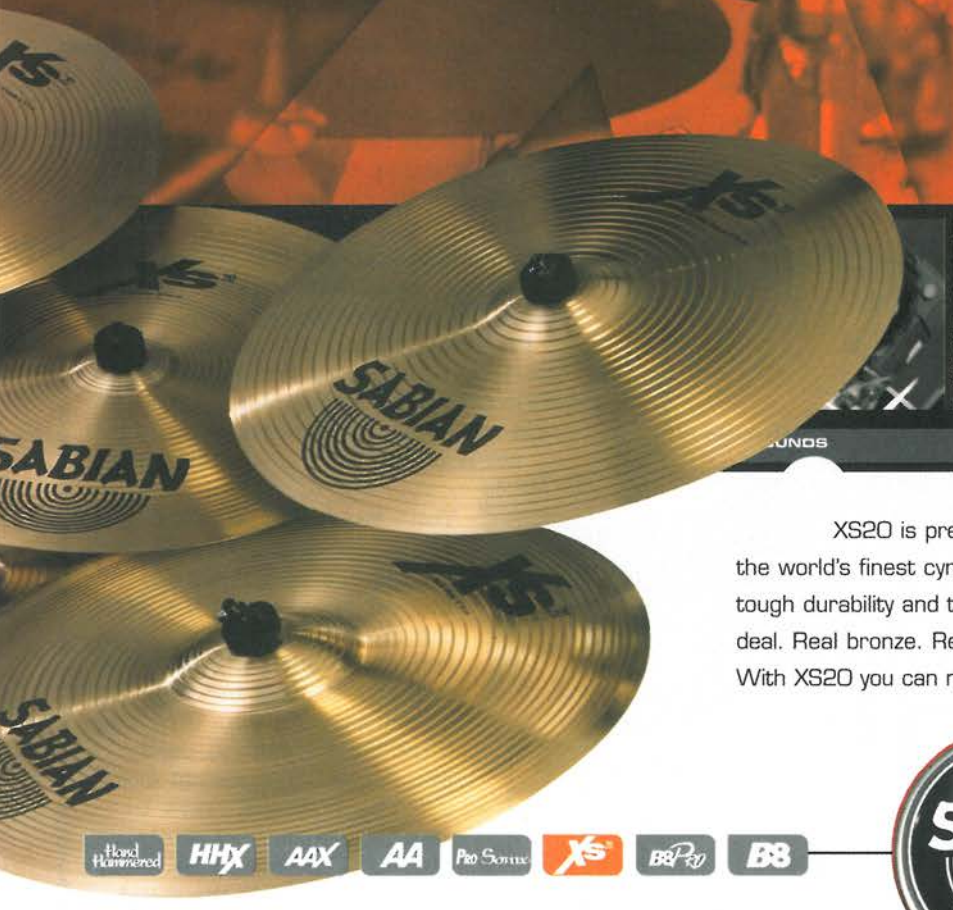

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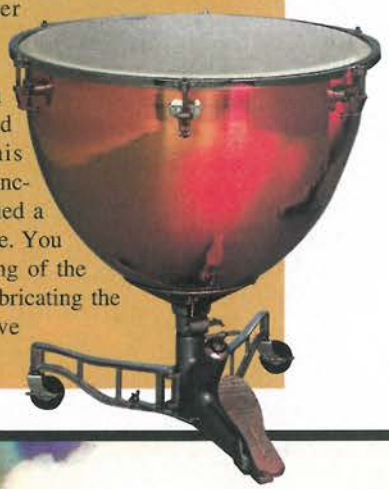
Crackling Timpani Heads

I have two Ludwig copper-bowl timpani. They were very corroded when I bought them, so I took them apart and cleaned them thoroughly. Ever since I put the drums back together, the heads make an awful crackling sound when I adjust the tension pedals. Is there something that I can put on the bearing edges to quiet this sound?
Drum Dude

Ludwig marketing director Jim Catalano replies, "A timpani head shifts over a fairly wide surface of the bowl when tuned from low to high. The crackling sound you're hearing could be from the metal channel of the head shifting and knocking from side to side when the head is tuned with the pedal. This causes a popping or cracking sound. Plus, like any drumheads, timpani heads will stretch, become flat, and lose resilience over time. If your timpani heads are old, you may want to consider replacing them. Newer heads are made with better tolerances and durability.

"Our current Ludwig timpani feature Teflon tape on their bearing edges for a smooth, frictionless meeting between the head and the edges of the copper bowls. This reduces the crackling sound you are experiencing. For decades prior to that, Ludwig applied a coating of paraffin wax over the bearing edge. You can do the same to achieve noise-free tuning of the heads. Installing new heads and properly lubricating the bearing edges of your timpani should solve your problem."



Barefoot Drummers

Why do some drummers play barefoot?
Charlton

Actually, *many* drummers play barefoot (or in their socks). Some say it's simply a matter of comfort and personal preference, in the same way that many drummers prefer to play only in sneakers, or in boots, or in hard-soled dress shoes. Other drummers have told us that they play barefoot because they feel a more direct physical connection to their bass drum pedal that way, and thus have more control over their playing.

We do caution anyone who plays barefoot—especially if they play very hard—that they run the risk of injuring their feet by doing so. They may develop arch problems since they have no support under their arches. We've also heard from drummers who bruised the balls of their feet due to the repeated impact against the footboards of their pedals. For those drummers we've recommended the use of Grip Peddler footboard pads (www.grippeddler.com) to cushion that impact.

The Rogers Studio Ten Kit

Rattling Rogers

I am the proud owner of a circa-1979 Rogers Memriloc Studio Ten kit. Throughout twenty-five years of gigging, the kit and hardware have performed like champs—with one annoying exception. Most of my cymbal stands have developed a loose, rattling rivet joint where the cymbal tilter assembly fits into the upper shaft. (Not a good situation for soft cymbal rolls!)

I've tried to squeeze and/or hammer the rivet connection tight again, but to no avail. Is it possible to drill out the existing rivets and get a good, tight connection with an over-the-counter handheld rivet gun?
Van Hunsberger

Your suggested solution is a viable one. However, we'd recommend a slight variation. Instead of replacing the existing rivet with another rivet, replace it with a small bolt, lock washer, and nut. This will be more secure than a replacement rivet, and can easily be re-tightened if it should loosen up. The bolt will have to be small to fit where the rivet did, so it shouldn't be a cosmetic detriment to the stand.

Uneven Earth Ride

I have a Zildjian Earth Ride that I bought about ten years ago. It's bowed steeper on one side, so that if you look at it from its profile, it's not symmetrical. I've always wanted to know if Earth cymbals were manufactured that way.

Stefano Ashbridge

Zildjian education director John King responds, "All cast cymbals are considered very organic instruments. Each individual cast cymbal will ultimately 'take' manufacturing processes differently. Even though Zildjian has implemented much state-of-the-art technology over the last two decades and has achieved much more consistency than ever before, there will always be an individual sound quality within each and every Zildjian cast cymbal made.

"Your Earth Ride cymbal went through the shaping process, and not much further. It 'took' its shaping in a way that created a variation that is unique to that particular cymbal. If the cymbal had continued on through additional manufacturing stages, that variation might have been eliminated at either the hammering or lathing stage.

"So to answer your question, the variation in your cymbal was not pre-ordained. But it obviously fell within the sonic range that we would consider 'acceptable,' or the cymbal would not have found its way into the marketplace."

Stick Designations

Since you've been in publication since 1977, you've probably already answered this. If so, let's just say I missed that issue.

My question has to do with drumsticks and their model and size designations—such as 5A, 2B, 1S, and so forth. I know there are many stick sizes that are unique to each manufacturer, but the "standard sizes" seem, well, pretty standard.

Can you tell me if there is any meaning to the number and letter designations, and how they came about? Why is a 5A a 5A?

E. Castle

Prior to the 1950s, there were no specialty drumstick companies. The prominent drum companies of those days were making and/or marketing all the drumsticks. There were far fewer models than there are today, and what models there were were given designations that referred to their intended use. The three most common stick model designations were (and still are): A, B, and S.

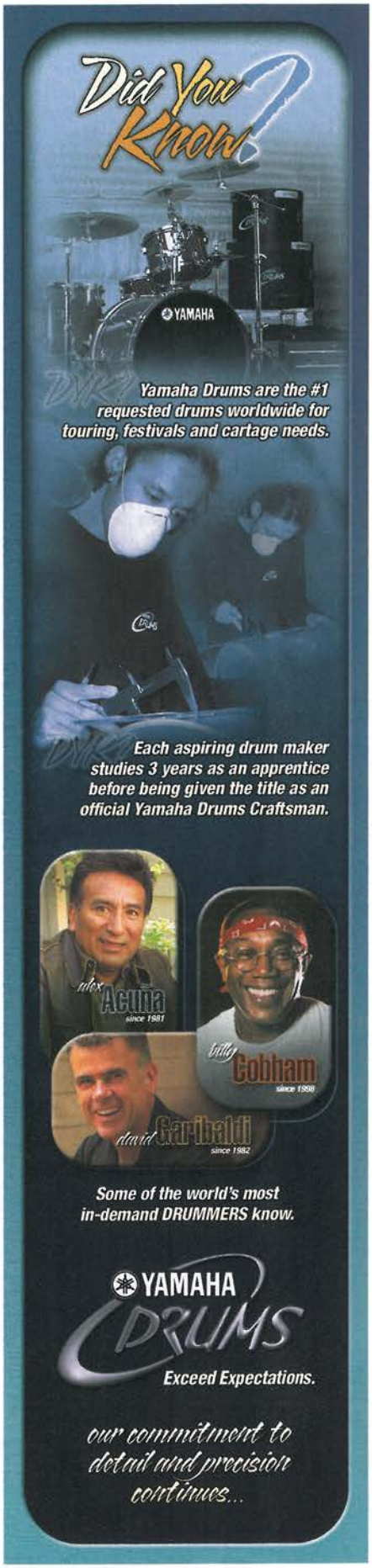
A "B" designation stood for "band," and referred to stage band, big band, or orchestral playing. An "S" designation meant "street," and referred to marching-band use.

The origin of the "A" designation is a little more vague. Basically it identified sticks that weren't B or S models. It might have stood for "all-purpose," but more likely it was simply the first letter of the alphabet and thus easy for everybody to remember.

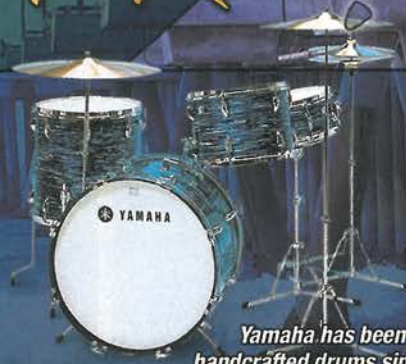
The numbers on the sticks were intended to give a general impression of their size relative to each other. In A and B models, the larger the number, the smaller the stick. That is, a 2B was larger than a 5B, a 5A was larger than a 7A, and so on. That system is still used today.

However, just to make things confusing, marching sticks went the other way—and still do today. A 1S is smaller than a 2S, which is smaller than a 3S. We can't tell you why. Some of these details are lost to history.

Readers with questions for this department may submit them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, or via email to rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.



Did You Know?



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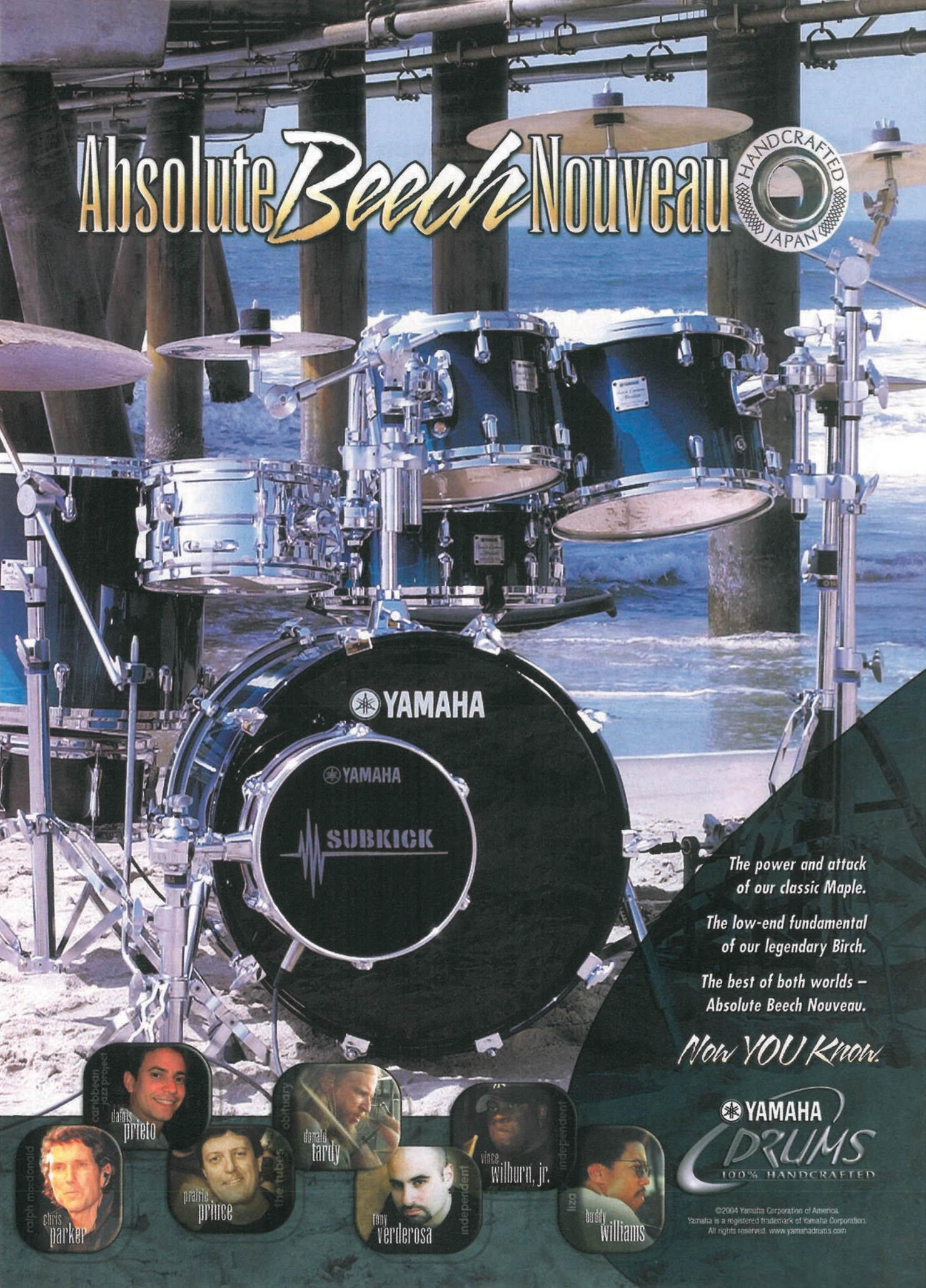
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Vinnie Colaiuta's Setup And Sound

Lissa Wales

Q Thank you for all the excellent drumming you've blessed us with over the span of your career. You truly are a modern drumming master!

I have three questions for you. First, what drumset and cymbals did you use on the first Jing Chi disk? They sound tremendous. Please run down the sizes and specifics. Second, the drumset on the Zildjian A Custom promotional video is not your white signature kit. It looks like a maple gloss kit, and the mounted toms appear larger than those on your signature set. Could you describe that kit and its finish?

Finally, your drums always sound so big and resonant. I know you use Remo coated Ambassadors on the top heads, but how about the bottoms? And can you explain how you tune? Are the top heads of the toms lower than the bottoms?

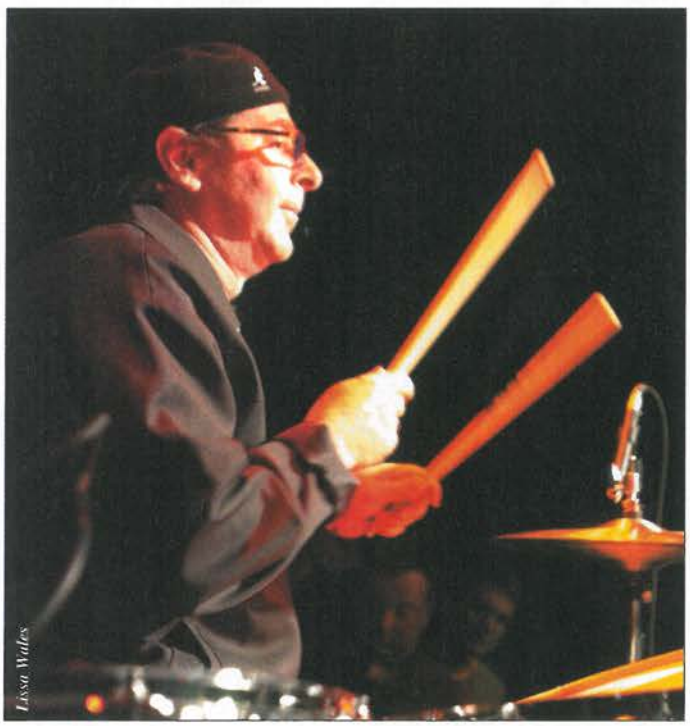
Thanks again for keeping us all on our toes and showing us how the drums can create music. **Joe Forthome**

A Thank you very much, Joe. The setup that I used on the first Jing Chi CD was a late-'80s maple Gretsch kit that I've had for quite some time. I used more than one snare drum, but the one I used a lot is my Signature natural maple Gretsch snare. The cymbals were a combination of A Customs and Ks, including a pair of 13" K hi-hats that I've also had for a long time. The ride is a 22" K, but not an available model. It's a one-off modeled after the "old K" sound. The other cymbals included 15" and 17" K crashes, a 19" A Custom crash, and an 8" A splash.

The set on the Zildjian A Custom video is the same kit. You're right, the toms are not standard. They're deeper. At the time the kit was made, they were referred to as power sizes. I find the sound to be quite "throaty."

I use the same heads on the tops and bottoms of my toms. I don't usually tune the top head tighter than the bottom. I might tune with a technique like that to achieve a specific effect, but not as a rule. Generally I try to achieve a similar tension, and then I fine-tune by ear and feel.

Letterman's Anton Fig On Big Endings


Lissa Wales

Q I've really come to appreciate your ability to play so many styles of music. Each time I hear you play a song that I have heard elsewhere, you play it with such authority and authenticity. Your repertoire must be well into the thousands. Each song sounds as good—and often many times better—than the original!

My question has to do with the endings of songs. Almost all songs that you play on the Letterman show end with the "big finish" ending, with you going from snare to cymbals with alternating hands. I was wondering if you used a particular sticking or group of stickings to accomplish this with such fluidity. **Frank Sanchez**

A Well, Frank...I don't know about "better than the original." But thanks anyway!

I'm not sure if you're talking about the end of the Letterman theme, or about the songs after the commercial breaks. Paul will generally conduct a big chord at the end of the commercials, in order to take us through the last few seconds of a song and make it time out correctly. In those cases I'm just playing anything I feel—nothing specific. Sometimes it could be single, double, or triple paradiddles between the snare, the toms, the cymbals, and the bass drum. It's nothing strictly prepared—just messing around. I hope this helps a bit.

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Practice Tips From Gerald Heyward

Q You're one of my favorite drummers on the R&B scene today. I'm really impressed with your solid grooves and your speedy hand and foot technique. Did you (and do you) practice rudiments to develop that hand speed? Do you prefer to practice on the drums or on a pad? And what would you suggest to help me develop the speed and power that you have on the bass drum pedal? **Jonathan**

A Thank you for your support. To answer your question regarding my speed, I practice both on the drums and on a practice pad. I don't really play rudiments, but I practice playing various licks.

All I can tell you regarding my foot pedal technique is that it's a true gift from God. I haven't studied any techniques or had any schooling in this area. It all came naturally. My suggestion for you to increase your speed would be to keep practicing your singles and doubles between the floor tom and the bass drum.

I'm happy that I can be an inspiration to you. All the best!

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Little Feat's **Richie Hayward**, March 1988

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Jason Bonham UFO And Beyond

After taking time off to get sober, re-prioritize his life, and bond with his family, Jason Bonham is back on his drum throne and staying quite busy. "It's been nice to play again for the right reasons," says the drummer. "I'd reached a point where I was just going through the motions to get a paycheck, instead of playing because I really *wanted* to play drums. Now I'm in a situation where if I get paid, it's a bonus."

You can hear Jason's return to form on *You Are Here*, the latest album by classic arena rockers UFO. Jason got the gig after being introduced to UFO vocalist Phil Mogg by a mutual friend. Although most of the songs were already written when he flew to Germany to record, Jason collaborated on all the arrangements and wrote the song "The Spark That Is Us" with the group while in the studio. "I hope this is the first of many collaborations between us," Jason says.

A key ingredient to the fresh sound of *You Are Here* is Bonham's infusion of bombastic drumming incorporating well-timed finesse, smooth hi-hat work, and the straight-forward punch of heavy bass drum patterns reminiscent of his late father, Led Zeppelin's John Bonham. After touring Europe with UFO, Jason will fly to the States to rehearse and record with Indianapolis heavy rock band Healing Sixes. Bonham also plays drums on that group's 2002 album, *Enormosound*.

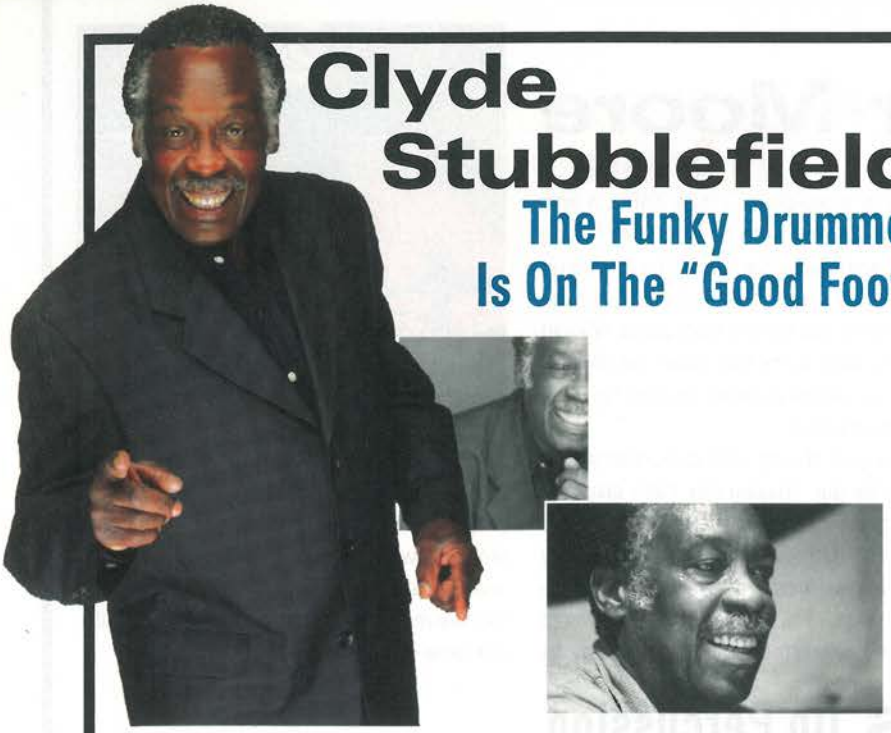
Besides his father—who is widely considered to be the most influential rock drummer of all time—Jason's drumming influences include Phil Collins, Dennis Chambers, and players he considers "real groove drummers" such as Jeff Porcaro, Little Feat's Richie Hayward, and Chad Smith of The Red Hot Chili Peppers. "It's not about technique," he says. "It's about putting that pocket down and playing a real cool groove."

According to Jason, the most important drumming advice he got from his father was to always keep it simple. "Some of the things dad played on the Led Zeppelin albums weren't fancy," Jason says, "but each was perfectly placed within the song. He told me, 'If you can play the beat—4/4 or whatever it is—and make *that* sound cool, then people will remember the little things you do on top.'"

Gail Worley

Clyde Stubblefield

The Funky Drummer Is On The "Good Foot"



Clyde Stubblefield continues to groove as hard as any drummer on the scene today. As everyone knows, his drumming on James Brown's "Funky Drummer" is one of the most sampled grooves of all time: It's been lifted by 2 Live Crew, LL Cool J, Ice Cube, Prince, Public Enemy, and Run DMC, to name but a few—approximately one hundred ten artists so far!

Did Clyde make any money from this? "No, nary a penny," he says. "But it ain't the money, actually, it's the acknowledgment. I created that groove and nobody even said 'thank you'—except Melissa Etheridge." Clyde has now recorded his own sampling CD. It features 349 loops and is available at www.numericalsound.com.

In fact, Clyde has two new CDs out: *Clyde Stubblefield—The Original* (available at Nardismusic.com) and *Come Get Summa This* (available at CDBaby.com), on which he shares the drum chair with his JB partner Jabo Starks. The disc also features Fred Wesley on trombone, not to mention bassist Bob Babbitt and percussionist Jack Ashford, of Motown's famous house band, The Funk Brothers.

Clyde, quite the philosopher, offers several good points we all should follow. "Don't worry about things that you can't change. You've got to have a positive mental attitude. But it takes work. You've got to learn how to make yourself happy. I feel good when I wake up breathing! I get happy lookin' at the rain fall!"

Clyde's advice for young drummers? "Get that soul feeling, like in church, and put a groove on it," he says. "First get the feeling, then follow your own rhythm and put a beat to it. You've got that inner energy, so *use* it."

Another pearl of wisdom from Clyde: "An old man once told me, 'Always expect the unexpected.'" This last one hit home recently when Clyde was diagnosed with cancer. But in typical fashion, he fought it hard and just got a clean bill of health at his six-month checkup. "I want to thank all of the people who helped me with my medical bills," Clyde recently told *MD*. "Things are looking good."

Jim Payne

Kinky's Omar Gongora

Stand-Up Guy

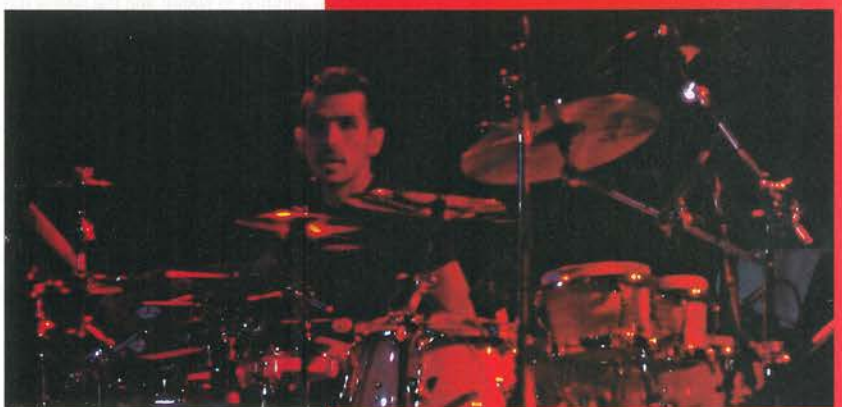
The key to watching Kinky's drummer/percussionist Omar Gongora live is to never blink. The fiery drummer, who fuels the band's blend of Latin rock, electronica, and disco, never stops moving as he swings from a DW drumkit that he plays standing up to congas, timbales, a Roland 808, and a TD-10. "Yeah, I have a lot of work to do," he says with a laugh. "That's why I'm so skinny. I get a lot of exercise."

Gongora has been playing standing up for about five years now, mainly because it's the only way he can get around his expansive setup. "In the beginning I played drums and percussion," he explains. "But I couldn't easily switch to the congas because I was sitting at a normal set of drums. Then I came up with the idea of standing up to play everything, and now I feel very comfortable."

Gongora and his Kinky compatriots recorded their second offering, *Atlas* (Nettwerk), in a jungle about two hours outside of Cancun, Mexico. The setting lent Omar's percussion playing a different feel. "It was an amazing place to record," he says. "I really felt more 'animal' when playing the congas, timbales, and djembe there. I started to make a whole percussion section by sequencing drumkit parts and then adding other parts with cowbells, congas, and djembe. It was really interesting. I did have to back off on some of the parts, though, because they were filling up too much space in the music."

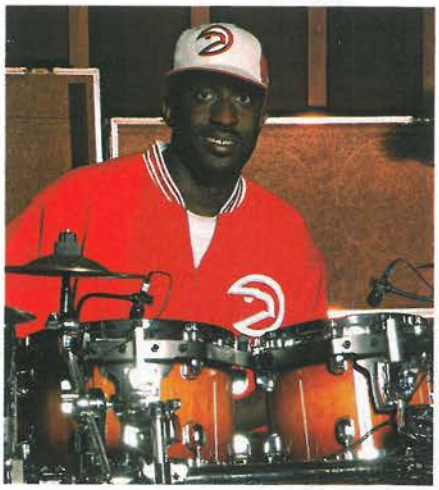
Simplifying the parts also enabled Gongora to pull them off live, which is important considering all of the touring the band does. Playing night after night, fatigue becomes an issue: "I do quite a bit of exercising on stage," he says, "especially on the congas. On the drumkit, I can use a lot of finger technique. But with the congas, it's all arms. It's a lot of work, but you can't avoid it. Anyway, when the adrenaline comes, you just can't stop it."

David John Farinella



Christina Aguilera's

Brian Frasier-Moore On Drums...



Philly born and raised Brian Frasier-Moore has been supplying the beat for Christina Aguilera since the beginning of her career. Not only is he thrilled to be her drummer, he also appreciates the relationship they've cultivated. "We're best friends," Brian says. "That makes this a great gig, even beyond playing the music."

On the musical side of things, Brian says energy is the key. "She really depends on the drums a lot. She's gotta *feel* them." And Brian understands how to deliver that feeling, having backed R&B superstars like Aaliyah, Ginuwine, and Usher.

"When I began working with Christina," Brian says, "I had to transform from an R&B musician into more of a pop player. I think R&B is a little looser, and you're able to do extra stuff. Playing pop for someone like Christina or Janet Jackson—who I've also worked with—is more about the parts and being a team player. My part has to be played so the bass player can play his part and the keyboard player can play his. It all has to come together."

Brian enjoys playing with percussionist Ray Yslas on the gig. "Having Ray there gives me the opportunity to buckle down, find the grooves, and find the best way to interpret my thing without worrying about all of the 'extras.' We also play a lot of Latin-flavored songs, and on certain sections Ray may be playing congas and bongos and laying the groove down. So I can, in turn, add a cowbell and timbales to make it more full. I have to say, we're so tight musically, we're almost like the same instrument."

...And Ray Yslas On Percussion

Percussionist Ray Yslas has spent the past two years working with Christina Aguilera, but he actually didn't nab the gig right after his audition. In fact, Yslas didn't get the call until a month afterwards, when he was needed to do a performance for AOL. "I had to learn three songs in a couple of hours," Ray says. Apparently he passed the test. He joined the band and went on a world tour after that.

"The most important part of this gig is playing for the music," Ray says. "From the R&B side, Christina's music needs color and accents. On the Latin side, it's very heavy on percussion. In those instances, I have to drive the group. It's actually a lot of fun because I've done many pop gigs where I don't get a chance to play much. But in this band I'm doing a lot. I even got to come out front and play cajon next to Christina on 'Come On Over,' in an 'unplugged' setting. And it's great playing with Brian Frasier-Moore."

While waiting for the summer '04 tour with Aguilera, Ray turned down the Britney Spears tour so he could spend time with his newborn son. He did, however, work in the house band of an ABC variety special with Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey, which he hopes might become a series.

Ray's secret to success? "You have to be a reliable person, first and foremost. You have to prove that from day one. For example, when I was with 98°, I was also working with Strunz & Farah and The Rippingtons. I had to fly back and forth across the country to fulfill my commitments with all of these groups. But from there, word got out about me and it led to even more work. That's how you build a career." **Robyn Flans**

Andy Narell Steel Pan Worldview

Primarily known as a steel pan player in the jazz idiom, Andy Narell is expanding his musical universe and exploring his version of "The French Connection." The first foreigner to compose for Trinidad's Panorama steel band competition (in 1999), Narell is now working with Calypsociation, a world-class thirty-piece steel orchestra in Paris, on a continent not normally associated with steel band music.

"Most of my work is in a jazz context with conventional instruments, and I'm the only person playing steel pans," Narell explains. "Calypsociation is an orchestra of steel pans, from soprano all the way down to bass. They commissioned me to write their music for the 2002 European Steelband Festival, and when the festival was finished, I offered to keep working with them to develop a whole repertoire of music that we could play in concert."

The result of that collaboration is the recent release of *The Passage* (Heads Up). "We put in two years of rehearsal and several hundred hours of studio time to create this record," Narell says with a grin. "I tried to capture the sound that you hear when you're standing in the middle of a steel band." In addition to Narell and the nearly three dozen steel pan players, special guests include Michael Brecker, Paquito D'Rivera, and Hugh Masekela.

What brought Narell to Paris in the first place? "While playing in the French Caribbean, I met three incredible musicians—Mario Canonge on piano, Michel Alibo on bass, and Jean Philippe Fanfant on drums." The four men formed a jazz quartet called Sakésho (pronounced sah-*kay*-show), which draws inspiration from the syncopated, polyrhythmic music of Martinique and Guadeloupe.

"It's a leaderless band, and we're all writing music for the group," Narell says. "We're playing a lot of gigs, and we're hoping to do another record later this year." The group's first album, *Sakésho*, was released in 2002.

"Both of these collaborations are very exciting," adds Narell, "but Calypsociation is a long-term project for me. Here is a steel band that is unlike any steel band in the world. They have the dedication to learn to play pan far away from the center of steel band activity. They listen to *all* kinds of music. And they can grasp what I'm trying to do in many different styles.

"Steel band music is a unique art form," Andy enthuses. "It's really symphonic, but it's also about the spirit of the music and the groove."

Lauren Vogel Weiss

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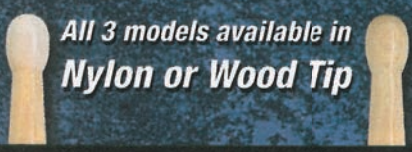

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NEWS

...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...

Deep Purple, with drummer **Ian Paice**, became one of the first rock bands to perform in China when they recently appeared at a concert in Beijing.

Jazz phenom **Gene Jackson** has been on tour with The Herbie Hancock Trio.

Percussionist **Dave Dunkley** is on a thirty-three-city tour with Tim McGraw & The Dancehall Doctors.

Fastball (with **Joey Shuffield**) is back with a new CD, *Keep Your Wig On*.

Paul La Raia

Chad Cromwell is on new CDs by Mark Knopfler, Trisha Yearwood, Lee Ann Womack, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Livingston Taylor, Amanda Wilkinson, CeCe Winan, Trent Williamson, Sugarland, and Raul Malo.

Tom Brechtlein is on the new Melissa Manchester CD, *When I Look Down That Road*. **John Lewis** is touring with Melissa.

Charley Drayton has been touring with Michelle Branch.

Steve Jordan is on Ricky Fanté's CD *Rewind*, with **Bashiri Johnson** on percussion. **Sterling Campbell** and **Kenny Wollesen** are also on the disc.

Billy Block, **Anton Fig**, **Mat Reale**, **Todd Snare**, and **Omar Hakim** are all on Ellis Hooks' US debut, *Uncomplicated*, on Artemis Records.

Amir "?uestlove" Thompson is on The Roots' new CD, *The Tipping Point*.

Original Dead Kennedys drummer **Bruce Slesinger (a.k.a. Ted)** can be heard on *Live At The Deaf Club*, featuring a gig from 1979.

Neil Sanderson is on tour with Three Days Grace.

Graham Hawthorne is on the road with David Byrne.

Matt Flynn is on tour with Gavin DeGraw.

George Thorogood & The Destroyers (with **Jeff Simon** on drums) is celebrating their 30th anniversary with the release of *Greatest Hits: 30 Years Of Rock*.

Mike Crews and **Josh Freese** are on Start Trouble's *Every Solution Has Its Problem*.

John Convertino is on Calexico's *Convict Pool*.

Joe Satriani's *Is There Love In Space?* features **Jeff Campitelli** on drums.

Carla Azar is on Robi Draco Rosa's *Mad Love*.

Yesod Williams is on tour with Pepper in support of their album *In With The Old*.

Johnny Dee is on new releases by Britny Fox and Frost, and on a new two-disc concert DVD by Doro.

Clarence Penn is on the new Gary Burton CD, *Generations*.

Jeff Berlin is on the new one by Catie Curtis, *Dreaming In Romance Languages*.

Medeski Martin & Wood's **Billy Martin** has just released a second volume of breakbeats, *illy B Eats, Volume 2*. It's available on vinyl or CD at www.amuletrecords.com.

Nathaniel Townsley is touring with Joe Zawinul.

Alex Solca

To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

MD Radio

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Gone but not forgotten: Big band great **Don Lamond** was born on 8/18/21, **Keith Moon** on 8/23/47. **Gary Chester** passed away on 8/17/87, **Lionel Hampton** on 8/31/02.

The Ronettes' "Be My Baby," with **Hal Blaine**'s famous drum intro, enters the charts on 8/31/63.

Recorded live over three days in August of 1969, Miles Davis's revolutionary record *Bitches Brew* features nineteen-year-old **Lenny White**, along with **Jack DeJohnette**, **Airto**, and **Don Alias**.

Bad Company (with **Simon Kirke** on drums) released their debut album on 8/17/74. It went to the top of the US charts, thanks to the strength of their number-1 single, "Can't Get Enough Of Your Love."

The Knack (with **Bruce Gary**) hit both the album and singles charts on 8/3/79 with the album *Get The Knack* and the single "My Sharona."

Happy Birthday!

Ginger Baker (Cream): 8/19/39

Airto Moreira (percussion great): 8/5/41

Jim Capaldi (Traffic): 8/24/44

Danny Seraphine (Chicago): 8/28/48

Sib Hashian (Boston): 8/17/49

Dennis Elliott (Foreigner): 8/18/50

Tommy Aldridge (rock great): 8/15/50

Anton Fig (CBS Orchestra): 8/8/52

Steve Smith (Journey, Vital Information): 8/21/54

Jon "Bermuda" Schwartz (Weird Al Yankovic): 8/18/56

Gina Schock (The Go-Go's): 8/31/57

Rikki Rockett (Poison): 8/8/59

John Farriss (INXS): 8/10/61

Steve Gorman (The Black Crowes): 8/17/65

Adrian Young (No Doubt): 8/26/69

Paul Doucette (Matchbox Twenty): 8/22/72

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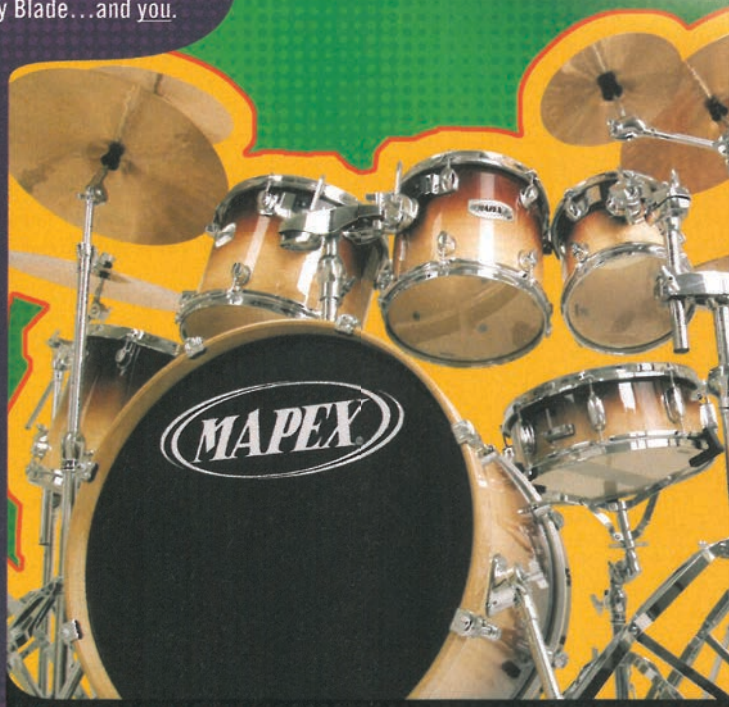

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Zildjian K Custom Session Cymbals

Gadd Personified

HITS

hi-hats offer amazing clarity, projection, and versatility

18" crash is ride-able

16" and 18" crashes respond well to sticks, mallets, and brushes

MISSES

18" ride is not for everyone

by T. Bruce Wittet

Steve Gadd would have rocketed into the annals of drumming were it only for the clever drum part he devised for Paul Simon's "Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover." But that was just an early taste of Gadd, who has gone on to blaze a trail of equally inventive patterns and grooves. Beginning in the early 1970s, Steve virtually owned the session scene in New York. When he wasn't working in the Apple, he'd be off to Los Angeles, London, Paris, or Tokyo. It seemed that every producer wanted a piece of Gadd.

Similarly, generations of drummers have been drawn to Steve, trying to emulate his rollicking tom fills, intense groove, and unique cymbal work. The latter included Steve's dead-stick shuffles. Just as Jimmy Cobb had done with Miles Davis, Gadd would alternate between holding the stick against the ride (to quell overtones) and releasing it. In addition, he'd often ride with the butt end of his stick to thicken the attack sound.

Steve's selection of crashes and rides changed over the years. But for the past decade he has stuck with the combination we'll look at today: an 18" ride, a 16" crash, an 18" crash, and a pair of 14" hi-hats.

When selecting among rides for a particular gig, Gadd would look to two 18" prototypes of different weights, which he obtained from the late Armand Zildjian. Eventually nature had its way, and one of those cymbals cracked. Steve returned it to the Zildjian factory. One thing led to another, and Zildjian decided to honor Gadd by replicating that ride and the rest of his cymbals. Named the K Custom Session Line, they first saw the light of day at Winter NAMM this past January.

An 18" Ride In A 20" World

Several years ago, I had the good fortune of playing Steve's prototype ride and his "mismatched" hi-hats backstage at the Modern Drummer Festival Weekend. I was so excited at the opportunity that I shot photos of those cymbals to commemorate the occasion.

To my recollection, Steve's 18" ride at the Festival was drier in tone than the current Session ride. In fact, I'll admit to being surprised by a pronounced clanginess in the review cymbal. In my test room it seemed to be all ping and high-end wash.

The ride was such a contrary animal that I phoned Paul "The Hammer" Francis, Zildjian's product-development specialist. Paul assured me that he had faithfully reproduced the Gadd prototype cymbal (with the exception of the crack!) and urged me to persist in my examination of the cymbals. Accordingly, I set about playing the ride when practicing and at rehearsals, mostly in small rooms. Its plentiful overtones and relatively high pitch continued to leave me puzzled.

The breakthrough came when the phone rang for me to sub in a variety show. The repertoire ranged from Sinatra to The Clash. I brought the Gadd ride and (just in case) a 22" K. After soundcheck I was kicking back when I heard a band member playing a shuffle on my drums. I did a double take. In that large club, the ride sounded *nothing* like it did in the test room. It was fatter, and it emitted a low-pitched, simmering cushion of wash, over which clearly sat the highs from the bead of the drumstick. I uttered to myself, *This is the Gadd cymbal I doubted?*

Now completely stoked, I embraced the 18" K Custom Session ride as my sole ride for the evening. I played it as I reckoned Gadd would, tapping it with the bead of the stick, slapping

it across the bow with the shank, and (when things got loud) riding the body with the butt end. The cymbal served as a mighty full-out crash, with more than a hint of the exotic. The bell was clean and precise. Even when I leaned into it, it didn't excite the body of the cymbal excessively. As for that test-room clang—well, it seemed to have vaporized!

As the show progressed, I decided to employ hearing protection—those foam plugs that look like cigarette filters. The Gadd ride didn't get lost. I would imagine that were I playing with Clapton at Hyde Park, with monitors competing for sonic space, I'd want that extra presence from my ride.

A New Spin On Hi-Hat Configurations

Just as the 18" ride is an odd man out, the Session hi-hats are an anomaly. A medium cymbal—which, in my estimation, leans to medium-heavy—that's extensively hammered in the Constantinople fashion sits atop a medium-thin cymbal hammered in the A Zildjian manner (though curiously silk-screened with a large "K").

Three words describe the Session hats: drop dead gorgeous. And this was the consensus of fellow musicians, bandleaders, and other drummers who heard me play them. When you place a heavy cymbal over a lighter one, you gain articulation and a clarity that punches through. These babies were delicate enough to produce light foot splashes in an acoustic jazz context. Yet they held their own on a particularly loud version of "I Will Survive" in the variety show. The chick sound wasn't as predominant as, say, Zildjian's Mastersound (rippled bottomed) series. But it was there when I needed it. With the cymbals held barely touching, the sizzle sound was sweet and sustained. I'd recommend that if you want to get your feet wet with the Gadd Session series, go with the hats first.

The Crashes

While the ride and the hats have brilliant finishes, the two crashes do not. They're workmanlike cymbals that will fit into any setting. The 16" has a relatively low fundamental pitch, but opens up to a high-frequency burst that drops off quickly. The 18" also has a low basic pitch. But when struck firmly it will cut through horns, guitars, and keyboards. It also has the ability to be ridden on, providing an alternate ride tonality to the "official" 18" ride model.

In terms of tone or timbre, neither cymbal was a jaw-dropper—just effective. In addition, both of the crashes performed exceptionally well when played with mallets or the rubber sleeves of wire brushes. In that regard, they reminded me of concert suspended cymbals.

Conclusion: E-Gadd!

And there we have it: A set of cymbals that are receptive to the various techniques that Steve Gadd employs. They *all* crash well—even the hats—and the 18" crash will double as a ride.

If you've ever pegged an 18" ride cymbal as being too small for the job, you might want to try the K Custom Session 18". Once I got over my preoccupation with the high ride overtones that I had perceived in the test room, I grew to appreciate the versatility and heightened control inherent in this smaller-than-usual ride.

The Session hats could easily launch a new trend. Ever since I experienced Gadd's old heavy-ish K sitting atop a new, thinner A at the *MD* Festival, I've become a convert and have fashioned my own home versions. But these "factory" models are the real thing—and sound it.

Two crashes, a ride, and hats—it's a pleasantly minimal setup that gains credibility because it bears the direct imprint of Gadd's collaboration with Zildjian. And, after all, a drummer could do worse than follow Steve Gadd's example.

THE NUMBERS

14" Hi-Hats **$260**
16" Crash **$310**
18" Crash **$362**
18" Ride **$362**
(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

Brady Custom Drums

Wonder From Down Under

HITS

ultra-resonant shells with minimal lug design

unique exotic look

outstanding craftsmanship and quality guarantee

by Mike Haid

Many "custom" or "boutique" drum companies offer comparable materials, manufacturing methods, and designs, making the job of choosing between them difficult. But Australia's Brady Drums stands out from the pack on many levels. Foremost of these is the unique exotic woods that Brady offers. Hand-selected jarrah, karri, and marri wood veneers are used for Brady's ply drum manufacturing. These species are found only in Western Australia, and are much harder than rock maple.

Our review kit is a seven-piece outfit (one more drum than the photo indicates) made from karri wood and finished in Brady's distinctive Blackheart satin veneer. Let's take a look.

Building The Perfect Beast

To create veneers to make their shells, Brady cuts each veneer from the same section of a tree, with all timber grain running in the same horizontal direction around the shell (not cross-laminated). The shells are created using a dry-mold system with special epoxy glue that excludes the use of water. The company feels that this method makes reinforcement hoops and other stability measures unnecessary. An air bag is used to apply extreme pressure to the shell for twenty-four hours. This unusual method allows the glue and non-cross-laminated sheets of veneer to morph into one solid mass, creating a shell that produces the unique Brady sound. A testament to Brady's confidence in their quality is their guarantee that Brady shells will never go out of round.

Looking Good

If you're going to dish out the big bucks for a custom drumkit, chances are you're going to want something that stands out from the crowd. You couldn't go wrong with this karri wood design. The Blackheart wood finish has a tiger-stripe look that may be the most distinctive of all Brady ply finishes. The various shades of brown and tan grains that encircle the shells make the Blackheart kit a visual stage centerpiece. Even the small, glossy, raised Brady badge (which features a drummer dressed in marching gear and carrying a parade drum) adds an individualistic flair to the design.

I was impressed with Brady's small, rounded lug. Its minimalistic design adds to the distinct look of the drum, but it also serves as a major component in maximum shell resonance. (More about that later.)

Let Freedom Ring

Speaking of resonance, Brady drums are designed to excel in that area, and they've got it down to a science. Our review drums were unquestionably the most resonant shells that I've had the pleasure of testing. Each size of shell was constructed with a different number of plies for optimum resonance. The smaller the shell, the fewer the plies—with the exception of the snare drum. (See the Numbers box for the size/ply breakdown.)

Each bearing edge was smooth, flawless, and consistent. Although the bass drum didn't feel perfectly round when running my hands around the shell, it was easily the most resonant of all the drums in this kit. The proof is in the pudding!

Hardware

Let's talk about that groovy lug design again. The Brady bass drum and tom lugs are machined out of solid brass and steel, and are about the size of a marble. The snare drum features classic tube-style lugs. (Even the vent hole grommets are chromed, machined brass.) The lugs are placed on the nodal points of the shells, and are isolated from them by special washers that are impervious to oil, moisture, heat, and UV lighting. (Can you say "attention to detail"?)

Brady insists that their drums sound best with triple-flanged rather than die-cast hoops, so their snare drums and toms are fitted with 2.3-mm triple-flanged models. The snare is fitted with a clear/chrome version of the Nickel Drumworks strainer. The snare wires are custom built using high-quality German wire.

The toms came equipped with a suspension mounting system using ball-joint tom mounts that clamp to a cymbal stand. There was no mounting hardware on the bass drum. The bass drum features easily adjustable and solidly constructed legs, and the hoops are held on with rubber-lined die-cast claws.

Heads Up

Hats off to Brady for their drumhead selection. The toms were fitted with clear Remo Emperor batters and clear Ambassadors on the resonant side. All the toms had a well-balanced sound and feel with a warm, wet tone and just enough sustain with no muting.

The bass drum featured Remo's clear PowerStroke 3 batter, with a non-vented Ebony PowerStroke 3 on the front and no internal muffling. The sheer power, bombastic low end, and solid punch of this bass drum turned heads when I used this kit on stage. In terms of overall volume, tone, and punch, this is the largest-sounding bass drum I've ever put my foot into.

I had never used a Remo coated reverse black dot head, but I was pleasantly surprised with its application as a snare drum batter. It seemed to help control unwanted overtones when the drum was struck in the black dot area, but it allowed the drum to open up when struck off center.

I'm sure that these drums would sound great with any head configuration because of their overall quality construction. But I felt no need to try any other heads, because the original models produced the exact sound that I'd be looking for in a kit like this. We're talking fat, punchy, and resonant.

Conclusion

I had *no* problem getting a great sound out of the Brady karri kit, whether tuning it up or down. The look, feel, and sound more than meet the criteria for an outstanding custom drumset, making it well worth the investment. There was nothing that I felt was flawed or scrimped on in any aspect of the creation of this kit. If anything, Brady has gone out of its way to make sure that you receive a truly custom, 100% handcrafted, top-quality kit.

THE NUMBERS

7x8 5-ply tom (not shown in photo)	$ 690
8x10 6-ply tom	$ 800
9x12 7-ply tom	$ 890
11x14 8-ply tom.	$1,120
13x16 9-ply tom	$1,160
6½x14 10-ply snare	$1,010
18x22 12-ply bass drum	$2,180

(011) 61 8949-72212, www.bradydrums.com.au.

Pearl BC–2000 Boom Cymbal Stand

Put 'Er There...Or Anywhere!

HITS

unparalleled positioning flexibility

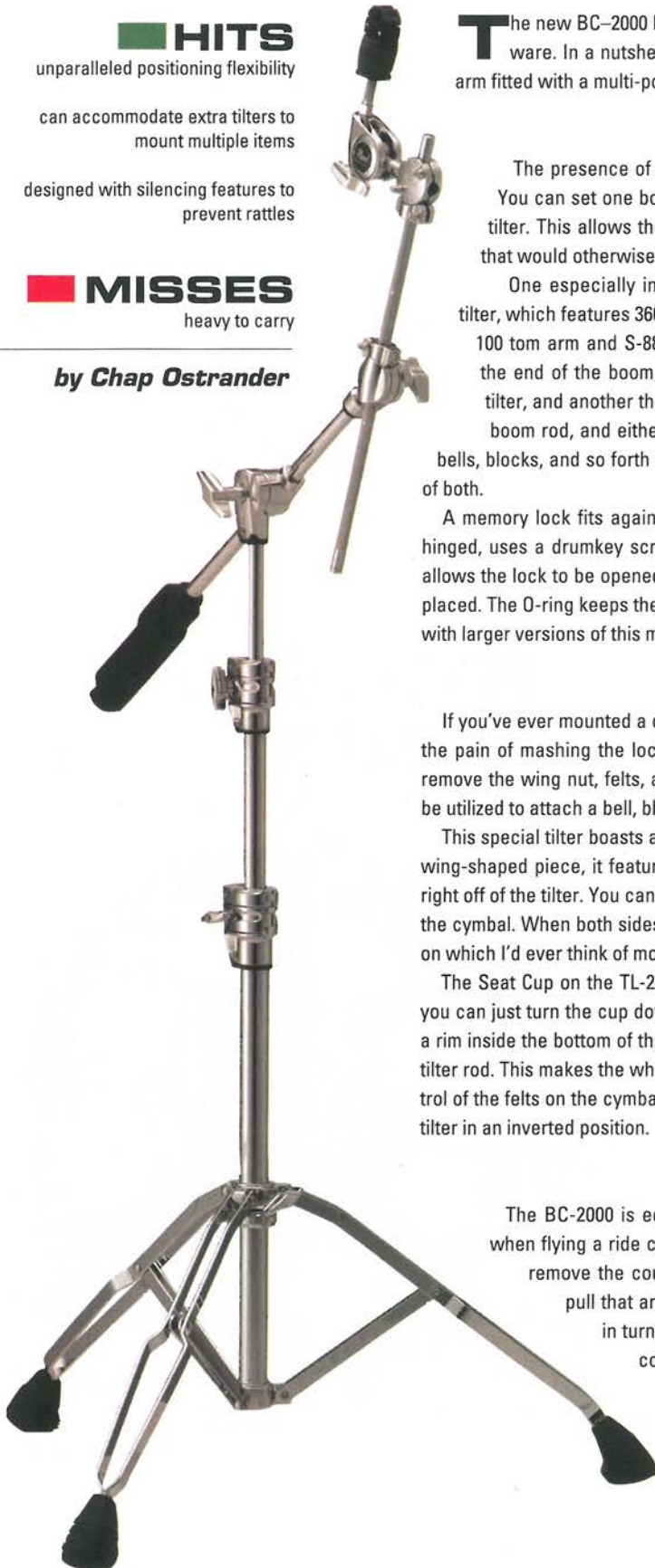
can accommodate extra tilters to mount multiple items

designed with silencing features to prevent rattles

MISSES

heavy to carry

by Chap Ostrander



The new BC–2000 Boom Stand from Pearl is, quite simply, a major innovation in drum hardware. In a nutshell, it's a heavy-duty, double-braced stand that holds a convertible boom arm fitted with a multi-positional tilter. But it's really much more than that. Let's take a look.

Booms And Tilters

The presence of two boom tilters gives the BC-2000 the flexibility of double articulation. You can set one boom arm to fly in another. A 3/8" knurled rod at the end holds the cymbal tilter. This allows the BC-2000 to position a cymbal (or other percussion item) in a location that would otherwise be hard to reach.

One especially innovative component of the BC-2000 is its TL–2000 Gyro-Lock cymbal tilter, which features 360° angling capability. Its Gyro-Lock system is an extension of Pearl's TH-100 tom arm and S-885W/S-985W snare stands. Rather than being permanently attached to the end of the boom, the TL-2000 is a separate unit. There's one hole at the bottom of the tilter, and another through the middle. This allows you to place the tilter anywhere along the boom rod, and either parallel or perpendicular to it. This feature lets you position cymbals, bells, blocks, and so forth above the rod, below it, or (by using additional TL-2000s) a combination of both.

A memory lock fits against the back (or side) of the TL–2000 to retain its position. This lock is hinged, uses a drumkey screw, and has an O-ring placed on the threads of the screw. The hinge allows the lock to be opened far enough to put it over the rod, so that it can be set after the tilter is placed. The O-ring keeps the screw from falling out during this operation. (The boom tilters are fitted with larger versions of this memory lock.)

Multi-Purpose Tilter Rod

If you've ever mounted a cowbell or a tambourine on a cymbal tilter, you're probably familiar with the pain of mashing the locking mechanism into the tilter threads. Well, fret no more. When you remove the wing nut, felts, and bottom cup of the TL-2000 tilter, you expose a knurled rod that can be utilized to attach a bell, block, or tambourine.

This special tilter boasts an equally special wingnut called the WingLoc. Instead of being a single wing-shaped piece, it features two hinged sections. When you open these sections, the unit pulls right off of the tilter. You can close one side of the WingLoc and spin it down to adjust the tension on the cymbal. When both sides are snapped down, it's locked. That makes the BC-2000 the only stand on which I'd ever think of mounting my ride cymbal with the tilter pointing down.

The Seat Cup on the TL-2000 is reversible. If you prefer the cymbal to "float" freely on the tilter, you can just turn the cup down so that it acts like a conventional bottom washer. If you turn it over, a rim inside the bottom of the cup seats against an O-ring at the base of the threaded portion of the tilter rod. This makes the whole package silent and keeps the unit in place so that you have full control of the felts on the cymbal. Another benefit is that the cup stays in place when you work with the tilter in an inverted position.

Multi-Position Booms

The BC-2000 is equipped with a rubber-covered counterweight, which I found helpful when flying a ride cymbal and two smaller crashes over a bass drum and toms. When you remove the counterweight from the arm that holds the upper boom section, you can pull that arm out of the lower boom tilter and place it at the top of the stand. This, in turn, creates a three-section boom stand. This version of the boom stand is convertible from straight to boom.

The TL-2000 tilter, showing the WingLoc half closed

Other Features

The height-adjustment collars on the tubes of the BC-2000 are hinged and lined with nylon. They feature matching memory locks, and are very secure. All of the tubes have plastic caps on their ends to prevent rattling while the stand is in use. The double-braced legs made the stand solid and stable. There is also a memory lock underneath the leg adjustment, so that the stand can be set to the same spread each time. It's called the Tripod Stop Lock. Even the wingnuts on the stand are ergonomically designed for comfortable operation.

Conclusion

The BC–2000 Boom Stand is a radical design that represents a lot of thought. Its flexibility allows it to hold cymbals and all kinds of percussion, in many configurations. I took it out on several gigs, and it turned heads everywhere. It does all things well, and it looks good doing it. Its counterweight and double-braced tripod do make it heavy, and the addition of extra TL-2000 tilters would make it even heavier. So you're going to notice its presence in your hardware bag. But its weight also helps it to hold cymbals in what would normally be awkward positions, and it gave me the freedom to think beyond normal restraints. It seems to be limited only by the user's imagination.

THE NUMBERS

BC-2000 boom cymbal stand **$229**
(complete with one TL-2000 tilter)
TL-2000 tilter ..... **$ 69**
(for add-on purposes)
(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.

Quick Looks

TreeWorks EchoTree Chimes

One of the most ethereal of all percussion sounds is that created by a set of wind chimes (also known as mark trees). While these instruments are available from several percussion manufacturers, only one company specializes in them exclusively: TreeWorks. And their latest offering, the EchoTree, is the sweetest-sounding chime innovation I've heard in years.

Most chimes, whether single- or double-row, consist of bars (or tubes) arranged in a linear pattern from shortest to longest. Thus they range in pitch from low to high or from high to low, depending on which way you stroke them. This ascending or descending tonality is always lovely, and it suits certain musical passages just fine.

But the EchoTree takes a different approach. It consists of seven sets of five aluminum/titanium alloy bars. The bars within each set do range from long to short, but the next set starts over again. So instead of a linear melody from low to high (or high to low), the chime produces a much more complex set of tonalities, with each set of bars "echoing" the other. (Hence the name.)

But there's more to it than that. The seven sets of bars do not duplicate each other exactly. In fact, there *is* a linear (low-to-high or high-to-low) relationship between the sets. So you *can* get an ascending or descending melodic flow from the EchoTree. It's just a fuller, richer melody than that produced by a straight set of chimes. And the overall sound is much larger than the thirty-five bars might be expected to produce.

Besides sounding great, TreeWorks chimes are beautifully handcrafted, using top-quality materials. Like I said—*sweet*. List price for the EchoTree is $140. A hard-sided carrying case is available at $55.

(615) 780-2641, www.treeworkschimes.com.

Rick Van Horn

Drum Solo Cherry Segment Jazz Kit

A Sweet Little Number

HITS

beautiful finish and attention to detail

huge sound from small drums

by Chap Ostrander

Drum Solo drums are the work of Greg Gaylord, a craftsman who combines a love of drumming with a keen environmental awareness—to say nothing of his skill as a builder. Greg creates drums that feature shells constructed of dozens of horizontal segments, arranged in a sort of bricklaying pattern (as opposed to the conga-like vertical segments seen in "stave construction" shells). All of the exotic woods that Greg uses are 100% FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) certified, meaning that they come from environmentally responsible suppliers that are involved in reforestation and replacement efforts.

Our 100% cherry wood review kit consisted of a 5½x14 snare, a 17x18 bass drum, and 8x12 and 14x14 toms. When I unpacked the drums, I was struck by the rich color of the wood and the smooth finish of the block segments that made up the shells. Then I set them up and began to play, and everything went hazy....

The Wood

One of the most striking features of the kit is the look created by the block construction. It reminds me of an elongated chessboard, or perhaps a butcher-block table. I asked Greg Gaylord about the differences in color among the blocks, and within each block. He explained that the color differences occur because the segments come from different parts of the tree. He uses wood that's all from the same tree, and that is as consistent as possible, in order to get a similar look and sound. The center of each segment is face grain, while the end is end grain.

Jim Esposito

Jim Esposito

All of the work needed to create Drum Solo drums is done by hand. The blocks are assembled in the order that they were cut off the board. The theory behind block construction is that the amount of glue needed to make a block shell is much less than that required for a multiply shell. The blocks only need enough glue to bond the edges together, while a ply shell has to have each ply covered with glue in order to achieve a solid bond. Some drum builders—including Greg Gaylord—feel that all this glue inhibits the resonance of the shell.

I noticed that there were some small black spots in the surface of the wood. When I asked Greg about them, he told me that they were "pitch pockets," which is a normal feature of cherry wood. The drum's glossy finish is provided by a topcoat of water-based material—again with the environment in mind.

Jim Esposito

Hand-Crafted Tube Lugs

Drum Solo lugs are machined out of solid brass stock. This process eliminates the possibility of air being trapped inside the bodies of the lugs when they're attached to the shells. This can happen with hollow cast lugs, and Greg believes that it's another factor that can reduce drum resonance.

The tube lugs have two points of contact with the shell. These points are small enough to minimize interference with the shell, but they evenly distribute the force created by tensioning the head. This means that the lug will have less of an opportunity to torque against the shell under pressure.

Since Greg makes his own lugs, he can work them in varying designs. For example, he tapped the bottoms of the lugs on the 12" tom so that the suspension mount can be fitted underneath the lugs, instead of between them and the drum rim. This makes head changing much easier. The mount seemed to be solidly attached under the lugs, and the increased resonance effect was the same as with any other suspension mount. In fact, I was astonished at how much resonance came out of that drum. (Greg can also supply "standard" lugs that match the others if the customer wants to mount the drum in a more traditional way.)

The Sound

The kit came fitted with single-ply Aquarian white coated heads. All of the drums responded to a wide range of tuning, giving the impression that they could be employed anywhere.

The toms possessed the kind of tone that seemed to swell and grow as I played them. It was quite an experience to play on a 14" floor tom that sounded larger than most 16s—and some 18s. This quality remained consistent whether I played single notes or complex passages. There was no choking or muddiness at all.

When I first got the call from *MD* to review this kit, I was told that the editors had been drawn to the Drum Solo display at last January's NAMM show by the full and resonant sound of its bass drum. When I struck the bass in my testing room, the surrounding space seemed to fill up with thunder. As with the toms, there was a tremendous amount of fullness available. You simply would not believe that this bass was only 18" in diameter if you heard it blindfolded.

The bass drum and toms were impressive, but even they didn't prepare me for the life and crack that came out of the cherry snare. The nature of cherry wood gives all the drums great sensitivity and response, but these features were most apparent on the snare. It sounded clean and articulate, with a rich fullness. When I played a solo passage filled with rimshots, those shots came crackling back at me with a vengeance. The drum also features the recently introduced Trick GS007 machined-aluminum throw-off mechanism, which has a high-tech design that promotes snare sensitivity.

Please note that a drum this responsive and articulate will convey to the audience (or the recording engineer) absolutely everything that you're playing. In other words, if you play something, you'd better mean it. For me it was pure joy.

Closing

Greg Gaylord founded Drum Solo in 1991. Since then he's been building custom drums for players representing all styles of music. He fabricates most of the components himself in order to maintain control over the quality. His drums are *built*, not just assembled from purchased parts.

Greg also has a great deal of respect for wood. He seeks out odd and rare types of wood from all over the world, even obtaining boards from historic sites. He combines this passion with an understanding of the nature of the sounds those different types of woods produce. These qualities make him an excellent source for players looking to custom-tailor their drums. If you're looking for a kit to define your sound, Drum Solo drums should definitely be seen *and* heard.

THE NUMBERS

Drum Solo does not establish "manufacturer's suggested retail prices." Instead, drum builder Greg Gaylord deals directly with each customer to establish a price based on the materials and labor involved in the creation of that customer's particular drum.

(415) 898-2647, www.drumsolo.cc.

"MY DW DRUMS TRULY ARE
A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION"

- NEIL PEART

©2004 Drum Workshop, Inc.

Bill Ste

EnRoute To Evolution

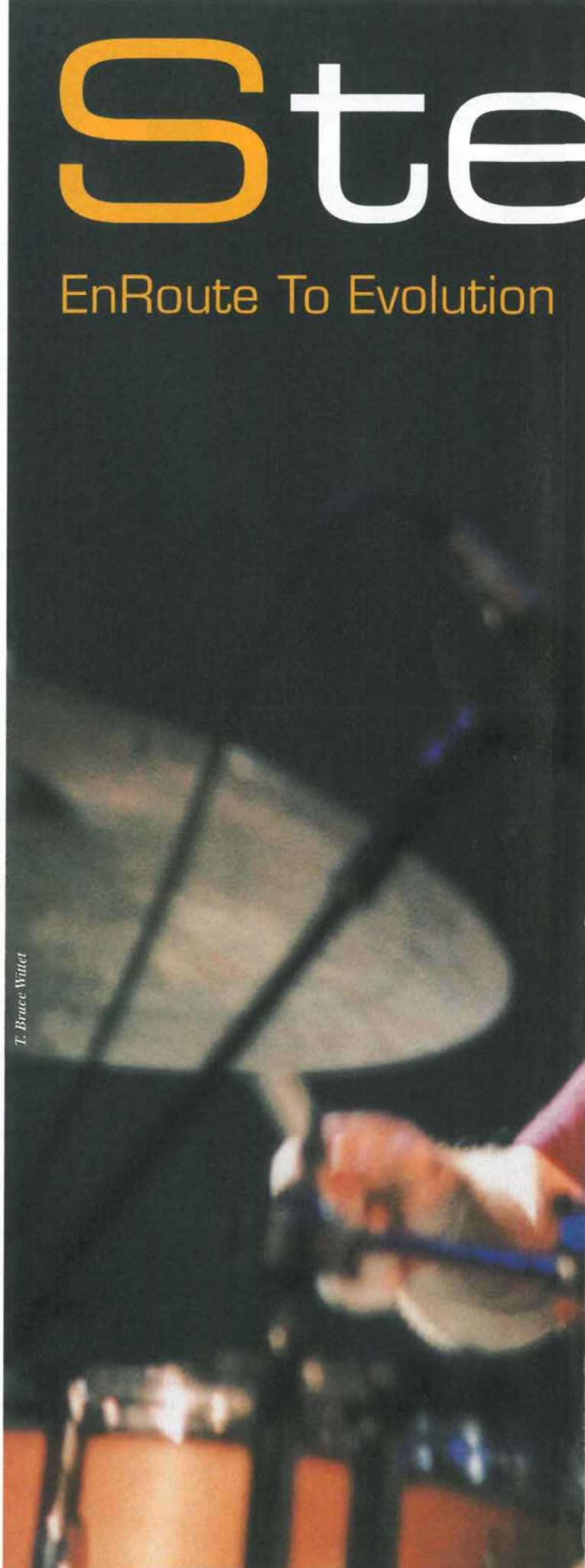
by Ken Micallef

It's been many years since Des Moines, Iowa's favorite son Bill Stewart burst on the scene with guitarist John Scofield and tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano—and was soon featured in his first *Modern Drummer* cover story (March '96). It's also been a few years since Stewart's two Blue Note solo efforts, *Snide Remarks* and *Telepathy* (and Evidence's *Think Before You Think*), made a considerable splash in both the drumming world and the jazz community at large.

Chronology aside, Stewart's impressive impact has been felt and revered ever since his 1987 debut recording, Scott Kreitzer's *Kick 'N Off*. Now as then, Stewart's mighty command of the drums, his highly propulsive and ignitable time feel, and his seemingly endless imagination coupled with absolute technical control and dexterity make him a drummer *other* drummers never tire of hearing. Clarity, forward motion, and graphic rhythmic detail expressed through impact, projection, and power are only a few of Stewart's musical attributes.

A creative and private individual with a fondness for films and fine wine, Bill Stewart is as articulate in conversation as he is when playing his Gretsch drumset. Most can remember the first time they heard the drummer, whether swinging madly on Lovano's *Landmarks*, Scofield's *What We Do*, or Larry Goldings' *Whatever It Takes*—or even playing a skanky funk groove with R&B saxophone king Maceo Parker.

Since then, Stewart has recorded with Michael Brecker, Wycliffe Gordon, Lee Konitz, Pat Martino, Pat Metheny, Chris Potter, and more local NYC underground musicians than a runaway subway train. In some aspects, Stewart's current drumming is simply an extension of his early work. But holy cow, *what* an extension!



T. Bruce Wittet

ewart

A handful of new releases exhibit Stewart's maturation and ongoing evolution with precision and remarkable diversity. Guitarist Peter Bernstein's *Heart's Content* (Criss Cross) shows the drummer in the hard-bop guise he wears with such great ease and effortless comportment. Saxophonist Chris Potter weaves his outside jazz spell around Stewart's super-logical but intuitive skill set on *Lift/Live At The Village Vanguard* (Sunnyside). And The John Scofield Trio's new one, *Live EnRoute,* shows what can happen when three combustible musicians well versed in each other's styles interact on the absolute highest plane of jazz improvisation. (By the way, look out for Bill's next record as a leader, a trio outing with pianist Kevin Hayes and Hammond organist Larry Goldings.)

EnRoute in particular is a high-flying, fire-breathing performance from Stewart. His drumming on it is nothing short of revelatory, be it the tipping bop of Denzil Best's "Wee," the odd-meter phrasings of alien-love ballad "Toogs," the maddeningly fast straight-ahead missiles "Name That Tune" and "Travel John," the shuffle science of "Bag," the spidery stickings of "It Is Written," or the New Orleans marching rolls and rumpus walk of "Over Big Top." Throughout, Stewart plays with a mixture of remarkable clarity, uncanny feel, flammable intensity, and original, sparkling creativity that is both inspiring and highly daunting to any drummer who thinks he too is ready to make the trek to New York and take on the big boys.

Luckily for us, Stewart gave us a very in-depth interview this month, from his Brooklyn home. Not only did he discuss his playing on recent recordings, he agreed to sit down with sticks and drumset in his practice room to reveal secrets about his arsenal of courageous and at times infuriating drum sounds.

At Bill's Sunset Park, Brooklyn Digs

MD: It sounds like your technique and means of expression have matured dramatically since your early days with John Scofield, and certainly with Maceo Parker.

Bill: That's probably true just because of all the experience I've had playing with different bands and going on tour and playing every night. Experience is a great teacher. And, of course, I try things every night, even though they don't always work. But I have this "memory log" of all my experiences. Because of it, it's becoming easier to get to a creative space as I get older.

MD: What do you mean by "memory log"? Do you have a photographic memory?

Bill: No, but I have clear memories of my experiences playing live or in the studio.

MD: Do you remember specific things you played on certain records?

Bill: Sometimes I do, even though I don't listen to my records all that much. I listen to them when they first come out. I want to hear what's going on. But then I don't go back to them.

MD: So it sounds as if your increased ability hasn't been a literal, technical practice method where you sat down and worked to get to a certain level. On the new Scofield record, your technical level and what you're playing in general is astounding.

Paul La Rata

But on other new records, such as the Chris Potter or Peter Bernstein discs, you don't take it out as much. Those performances are more laid-back, your cymbal patterns aren't as broken, and it's more old-school.

Bill: That's partially due to the difference between the personalities involved, and the instrumentation. The Potter record was recorded live at the Village Vanguard with piano. Any time I'm playing in a club with piano I have to be very careful not to step on the piano player as far as what he's playing. And also, volume-wise, certain notes on the toms might cover the piano chords, etc. You have to be very sensitive to that.

Paul La Roia

With John [Scofield] and Steve [Swallow], it's a trio, so when John is soloing there's no comping instrument, which leaves me a lot of space. And also, John plays louder than a piano. With one less musician in the band, it allows me to go nuts, if that's what I want to do. And I can do so without covering or overshadowing the other guys in the band.

I try to make the music happen in the best way for whatever situation I'm in. It's a pretty intuitive thing while it's happening. I don't go in to a project with an agenda of either going nuts or really cooling it. I'm just listening and reacting. I just try to play every gig with the best energy I can.

MD: It also sounds like you're playing *very* quietly at times, using a great deal of dynamics.

Bill: That's something I've always done to some extent; maybe I'm doing it more now. One thing about the Scofield trio is that I can play with a really wide dynamic range. The electric instruments can match that. A piano can't. When my volume is maxed out, that won't work with a piano in a club. And the Scofield record was recorded a year after the Potter one, so maybe there's also some development there.

MD: What's the difference between playing with Pat Metheny and John Scofield as rhythmic foils?

Bill: With Metheny, I play more ballads and what people call even 8th notes, feels that are influenced by Brazilian music, but looser. I also play more fast tempos with Pat. With John, the music gravitates towards medium tempos. Pat is more influenced by Brazilian music, and John is into New Orleans music and R&B. But they have the jazz tradition in common.

MD: How do you develop new ideas? On the Scofield album, for instance, it sounds as if you're playing more cross-rhythms than ever before. Do you ever surprise yourself on stage?

Bill: Sometimes. I'll play things that I think I know how they sound, but when I hear them back they sound like something else. Sometimes when I practice I just improvise. Then, if I come upon something that's interesting, I'll work with it for a while, maybe developing one or two other ideas from that initial one. Then I develop other ideas from those. If you have one idea, you should be able to come up with ten more. By the time you get to the tenth one, a listener might not think it's related to the first, but it is.

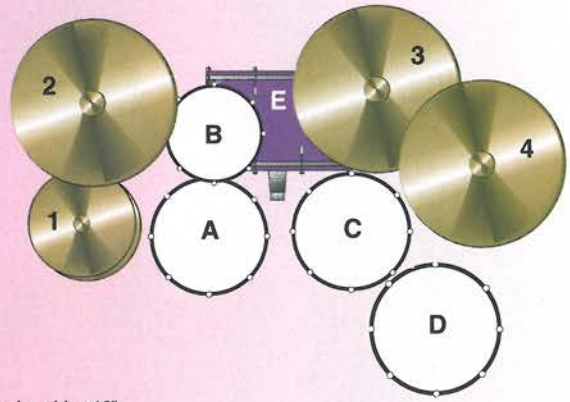
MD: Can you give an example of that process?

Bill: I'll take an idea, whatever it might be, and then play it backwards. Or if it's an idea that uses single strokes, I might play a double stroke where each single stroke is. Then I might play the same idea but change the instrumentation of where I play

Bill's Kit

Drums: Gretsch in purple stain finish
- **A.** 6½x14 Ludwig hammered brass snare (with tube lugs)
- **B.** 8x12 tom
- **C.** 14x14 floor tom
- **D.** 16x16 floor tom
- **E.** 14x18 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" hi-hats (Oriental Trash Hat Top on bottom, old K on top)
2. 22" K Zildjian Jazz ride (1980s-era)
3. 22" Zildjian prototype
4. 22" prototype



Alternate Cymbals: 22" K Constantinople, older 18" and 22" Ks (thin and with big cracks), 8" and 10" Oriental Trash splashes
Heads: Remo coated Ambassadors on snare, bass drum, and tom batters, clear Diplomats on bottom of toms
Sticks: Zildjian Bill Stewart Signature model

it on the drumset. And then, instead of a double stroke on every stroke, I might play a buzz stroke. Right there I'm up to five ideas.

This might all sound like a very organized way to go about developing ideas. But for me, when I work on things like this, the whole process is more of an intuitive thing. As William H. Macy says in *Fargo*, "I'm doing my best here." [laughs]

MD: Another surprising thing on the Scofield record is your level of overall control on the set. You seem to be able to play anything you want at any volume level, at times playing explosively at a low volume.

Bill: I think most drummers have more trouble playing quietly than they do playing loudly. I've had a lot of experience in situations where I had to play super quiet. In fact, I just did a piano-trio gig in Italy in this big echoey hall, and they didn't have a PA. You know how high the decibel level of a drum can be in a place like that. So experiences like that are very helpful.

On that particular gig, at first I rolled my eyes, but then I realized it could be a nice challenge to try and give the music some intensity at that volume. The result of that is, when I play with a group that's a bit louder—like the Scofield trio—I can still use some of that "volume control" I've developed in other situations.

Gettin' Busy, Enroute

Here we play Bill his "fours" from the first track of the John Scofield Trio disc, EnRoute. *As the song flies by, Bill jokes, "This is when jazz died."*

MD: On the third set of fours you play a very call-and-response phrase up and down the toms. Are you thinking of a melodic phrase? Are you commenting on something Swallow just played?

Bill: It's just a rhythm, whatever I came up with at that particular moment. Two seconds before that, I wasn't thinking about it. I didn't plan it or work it out at home. That's about letting myself go creatively.

Also, it's very important to be relaxed in that setting. By being relaxed, you can come up with things like that. I think it's harder to be creative and be yourself if you're not relaxed or comfortable. If you're not relaxed, you're thinking about too many other things—extraneous thoughts—which get in the way of the music.

MD: Is there ever any hesitation on your part about what you'll play in those situations?

Bill: Occasionally there is, when I'm not having a good night.

The fours continue.

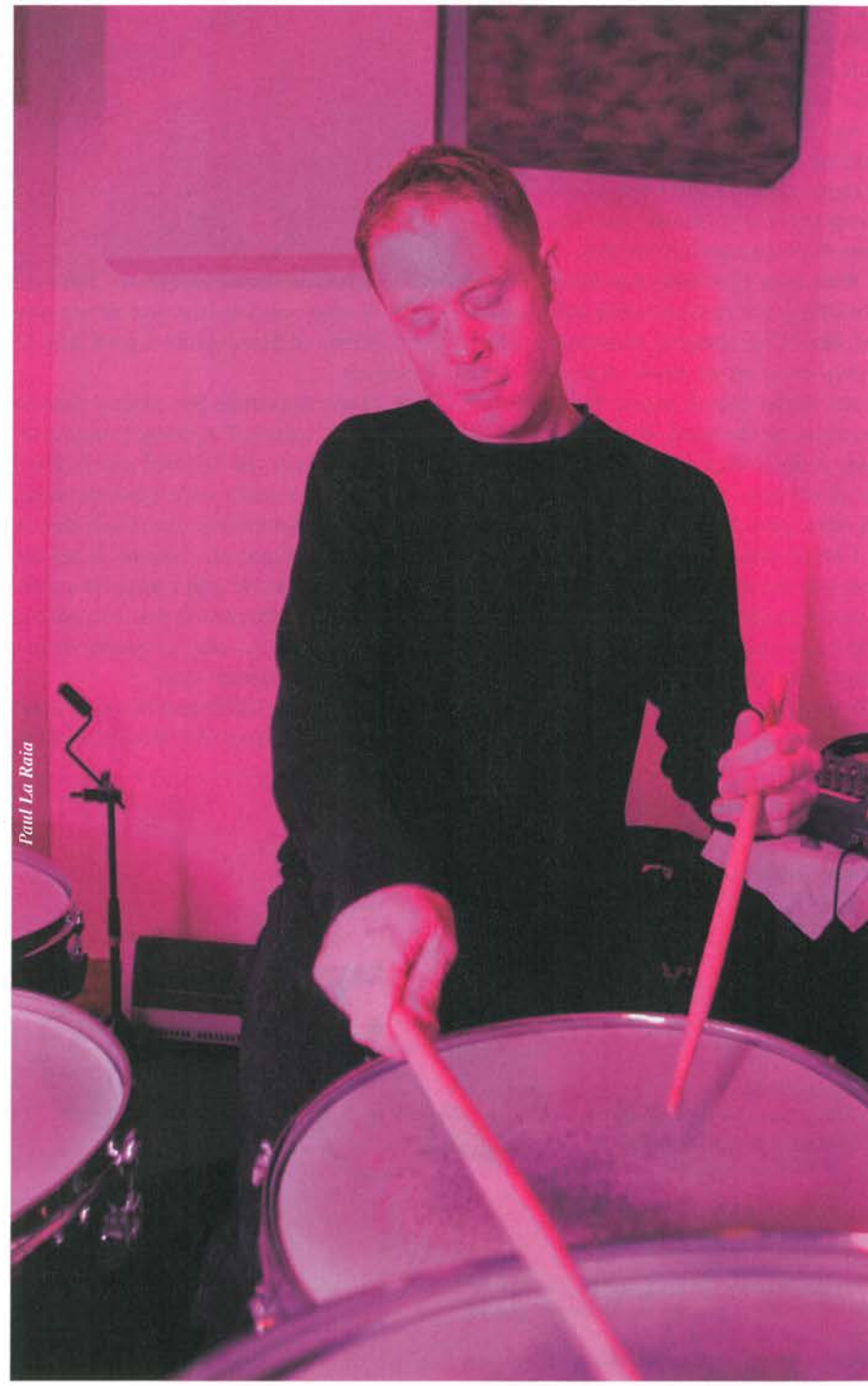
MD: That following set of fours sounds like some kind of a cross-rhythm. Where's the bass drum dropping?

Bill: It's playing dotted quarter notes. I'm not sure exactly what the snare drum is doing. I could transcribe my whole solo, but I'll leave that to someone who has the time.

The fours continue again.

MD: Is the cross-rhythm idea something you've explored more recently?

Bill: It's something that I've been developing. That seems to be an area in drumming


Paul La Raia

where there's quite a bit left to be explored. There are people who have done a lot with it, but it's still an area with a lot of possibilities.

I think I've gradually added to the kinds of things I can do in terms of cross-rhythms. And it seems that once I learn one type of cross-rhythm, it's like riding a bike, as they say. Just the experience of playing different polyrhythms makes it easier to play new ones.

MD: That last four had a calypso or Caribbean feel to it. Is the genesis of that for you the influence of Ed Blackwell?

Bill: Yes. Ed Blackwell would be a big influence on me in that area. He played polyrhythms that actually sound like two or three drummers. He studied African music a lot and the drummers who play together in Africa. Ed translated some of that to the drumset.

I once took a lesson with Ed in 1987, after I met him at Tower Records in New York. He was there watching Max Roach play solo. I had gone to see Max, and Ed was there. So I went up to him and asked if I could take a lesson and he said yes.

The lesson was interesting. Ed didn't ask me to play. He didn't say, "Sit down and let

Recommended Stewart

Recordings

Artist	Album
Bill Stewart	Telepathy
Bill Stewart	Snide Remarks
John Scofield	EnRoute
John Scofield	Meant To Be
John Scofield	What We Do
Larry Goldings Trio	Moonbird
Larry Goldings Trio	As One
Peter Bernstein	Earth Tones
Peter Bernstein	Heart's Content
Chris Potter	Lift
Pat Metheny	Trio 99>00
Scott Colley	Initial Wisdom
New York Trio	Love You Madly
Bill Carrothers	Ghost Ships

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Miles Davis	all	Tony Williams, Philly Joe Jones, Jimmy Cobb
Aretha Franklin	Queen Of Soul—The Atlantic Years	Roger Hawkins, Bernard Purdie, Ray Lucas
McCoy Tyner	The Real McCoy	Elvin Jones
Chick Corea	Now He Sings, Now He Sobs	Roy Haynes
Keith Jarrett	Standards Live	Jack DeJohnette
Wayne Shorter	Et Cetera	Joe Chambers
James Brown	Motherlode	Clyde Stubblefield, Melvin Parker, John Starks
Mustapha Tettey Addy	Les Percussions du Ghana	various
Dewey Redman And Ed Blackwell	Red And Black	Ed Blackwell
Lee Morgan	Delightfulee	Billy Higgins

Also, various classical music, especially by composers Stravinsky, Bartok, Brahms, Ravel, and Messiaen.

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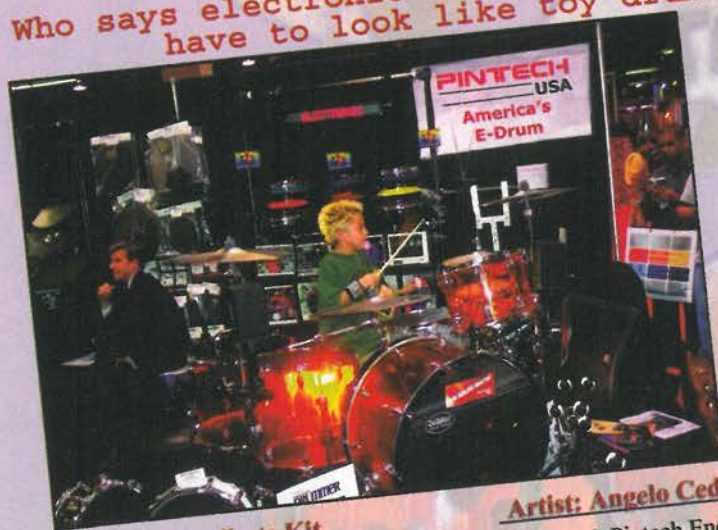

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me hear what you do." He immediately brought out these notebooks of drum music and said, "Okay, sit down and read from these." I began reading through it as best I could. I then realized that I was playing Ed's own ideas that I had heard him play on record. He had all of his stuff written down in a notebook from 1959.

Ed had obviously worked on polyrhythms. He developed them one idea at a time, building one upon the other. He did a lot of that, coming up with slight variations of a first idea that led to a second, which led to a third. Even though it was a very different drum lesson because he never heard the way I played, it was very educational for me because I got to see how he came up with some of his ideas.

MD: Who are some of your other influences?

Bill: I've also been influenced by Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, Jack DeJohnette, Tony Williams, Philly Joe Jones, Billy Higgins, and Joe Chambers, plus forty other people.

MD: In the beginning of "Toogs" you play another cross-rhythm.

Bill: That is triplets in a group of five.

MD: Does a pattern like that relate back to Ed Blackwell, or is it something different?

Bill: Actually, that relates to Max Roach on "Un Poco Loco." He plays a pattern like that, but I think he used 8th notes on a cowbell. It's the same kind of pattern but in a triplet form. Tony Williams also developed ideas like these.

MD: "Name That Tune" from *EnRoute* is a pretty fast tune. Do you often play songs any faster than that?

Bill: Not very often. In fact, that's the fastest song I've ever played with Scofield. I don't play what they call "Max Roach tempos" very often. I find that I need to practice fast tempos now and then, because a lot of the gigs I play these days don't require me to play those kinds of tempos. If I haven't been doing it for a while, I feel like I've lost a little something on them.

"I'm an improvising musician. When I practice, I work on coming up with ideas in the moment."

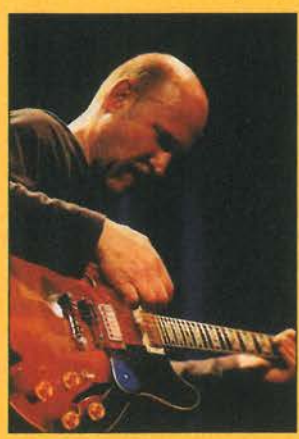
Paul La Raia

Speaking Of Bill

Bandleader/guitar-greats John Scofield and Pat Metheny weigh in on Bill Stewart.

John Scofield

"What is it that makes certain drummers so much better than everybody else? It's that they understand the *music*. Jazz is an interactive thing. When you play it, you're having a conversation. And with Bill, the conversation is really great. Having that ability makes the music better and deeper. And that's on top of Bill's wonderful rhythmic choices and the way he drives the beat.



"Bill really understands the music. He *knows* what notes we're playing when we improvise. He's always coming from such a musical place. That's true of all the great musicians who play drums. They understand and hear what everyone else is playing, and they understand the momentum of the music. They know how to complement what's happening. If you're a drummer and you're thinking, 'I want to be a great drummer,' you lose the perspective of, 'I want this music to really work as a unit.'

"Bill always takes care of business. And it seems that the music comes out of him rather effortlessly."

Pat Metheny

"Everything about playing with Bill is a joy. He truly is one of the greatest drummers I've ever had the luck to share a bandstand with.

"Of course, all of the obvious things are in place with Bill. He has great time and he has an evolved sense of dynamics coupled with a truly amazing touch. Most importantly, Bill has the ability to identify the essential things in the music that need to be played. And then he does it with such artistry and insight as not to be believed.

"But the thing for me that makes a musician truly stand out is something that you only get a sense of when you're on the bandstand with him night after night. That's where you really get a sense of how deep he goes and how far-reaching his commitment to the music is. Bill fits into that super-small group of musicians who achieve a creative connection from night to night with a consistency level that is near one-hundred percent.

"The other thing about Bill that makes him a personal favorite of mine is his deep melodic skill. It's easy to transcribe hip things and talk about the myriad of things that musicians love to quantify, like chord substitutions, chromatic lines, or maybe, in the case of drummers, rhythmic displacement or some fancy drum lick. But one thing that remains immune to analysis is the elusive and somewhat mysterious nature of melody itself. For musicians, it almost seems as if that melodic 'thing' is either there or it isn't. Of course, in the drum world, the two masters of this would be Max Roach and Roy Haynes.

"To me, Bill is in that same echelon as a rhythm melodicist. He takes ideas and develops them over long periods of time that have the narrative qualities that are found only in the most advanced improvisers. And he couples that with the inevitable resolutions that only an advanced melodic thinker can offer. It's these qualities that make Bill really able to communicate with an audience. He's one of the few drummers around that I want to hear solo on every tune."

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Bill Stewart

MD: What do you practice for speed, and what's the key to getting it as fast as you do?

Bill: There are at least a couple of ways I work on it. One is just by sitting down and playing a fast tempo for a long stretch of time. I'll also set a metronome to a fast tempo and then play along with it for a few seconds, and then turn off the metronome and continue playing for maybe fifteen minutes. Then I'll turn the metronome back on and see if my tempo has gone up or down. There's also a stamina thing about playing fast tempos; you have to learn how to conserve your energy at times in order to not exhaust yourself.

MD: Do you keep a constant cymbal pattern at fast tempos, or do you break it up?

Bill: I practice both ways and use whatever works best for the music.

MD: How does stick height come into play when playing fast or in how you pull off some of the very intricate stickings you use?

Bill: That's hard to answer, not really being a technically minded drummer. I know the feeling of how I get my sound. But my best guess is that when I'm playing fast, I'm probably not going to bring the sticks up as high as when I'm playing slow.

A Lesson With Bill

We move to Stewart's drum room, which is an 8x10 space in another part of his Brooklyn home, lined floor to ceiling with sheets of foam rubber carpet underlay. The floor has also been covered with acoustic deadening wallboard. The ceiling is fitted with foam rubber, and several shelves (also covered with foam rubber) act as baffles to cancel standing acoustic waves.

Bill's practice set consists of a Gretsch four-piece: two old round-badge toms (8x12, 14x14), a wooden 5½x14 snare, and an odd-shaped Gretsch bass drum. "It's a custom-made 10x22," Bill explains. "I'm able to play it without any blankets or muffling in it, except for a couple of felt strips. It's less boomy than a 22" of normal depth. It's more compact and it responds very quickly. I haven't used it on gigs yet, but I'm waiting for the right opportunity to do so."

The room is also littered with cymbals of all sizes, including a small China. On the kit are two 22" Zildjian prototypes and a 14" pair of hi-hats (New Beat on bottom and old K on top).

MD: When you're looking for cymbals, what do you listen for?

Bill: The first thing I have to do is play the cymbal. And it helps to be able to play it in a few different rooms. One room can be deceiving. I think sometimes people pick out cymbals at their local drum shop, where they might be surrounded by mirrors, glass, and all sorts of things that can affect the sound. Ideally, I like to hear a cymbal in more than one environment.

MD: But don't you choose cymbals at the Zildjian factory in the big cymbal room?

Bill: Yes, they do have a special room to listen to cymbals. But the room is pretty dead. I've been known to take cymbals into the hallway there.

MD: I notice that one of these prototype rides has only one rivet.

Bill: For me, one rivet gives a cymbal what it needs. It depends on the cymbal, of course. I like some cymbals without rivets.

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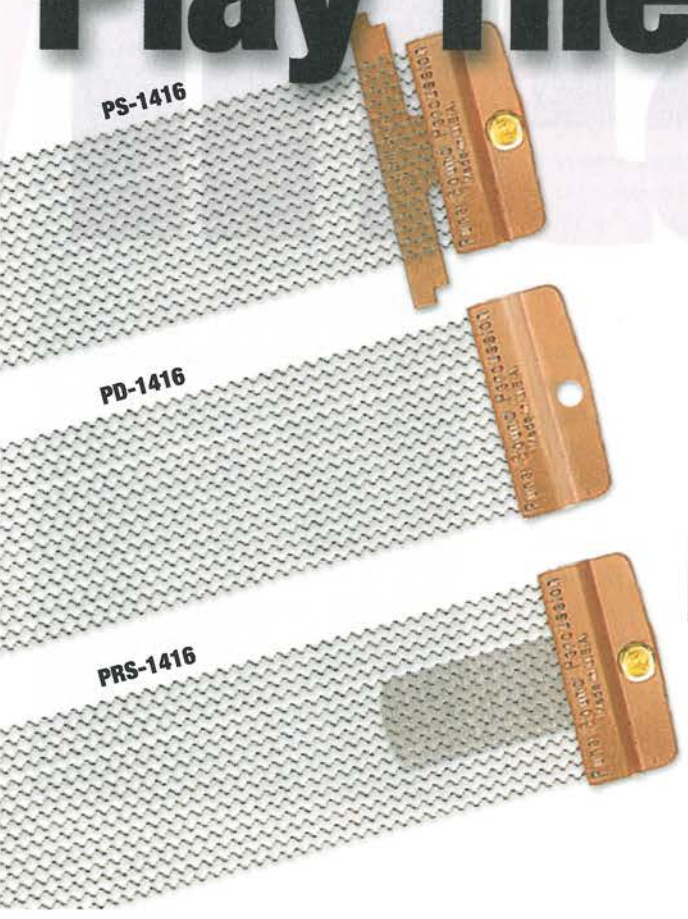

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But if I'm using a riveted cymbal, one rivet is enough. With a dry cymbal, one rivet will allow me to play a slow tempo and fill out the tempo more.

MD: You don't angle your cymbals very much.

Bill: They're not at extreme angles. It has to do with the sound I like to get from the cymbal and also how I feel when playing it. I've never been very comfortable playing cymbals at extreme angles. Also, I like to get different sounds out of a cymbal. This is nothing unique to me. All of the great drummers from before have done this. I like to be able to get a basic stick sound [strikes the cymbal with the tip] and a shoulder accent [strikes with shank of stick near tip], which I use a lot. That's how I play accents a lot of the time.

Instead of hitting a cymbal harder, I'll use the shoulder of the stick. Some cymbals don't produce a good shoulder accent, so that's something I listen for in a cymbal. It's not a crash sound, it's somewhere between the two. I can place an accent with it within a pattern. It creates a different sound and a different tone.

MD: In general, do you play the cymbal in different spots for different sounds?

Bill: I'll vary the spot slightly, but it depends on the cymbal. Generally, I have three sounds that I use on any cymbal: The ride tone, the shoulder accent, and the bell. And some cymbals produce nice sounds when you play them just next to the bell. It's like a little hollow spot that you can take advantage of as an effect.

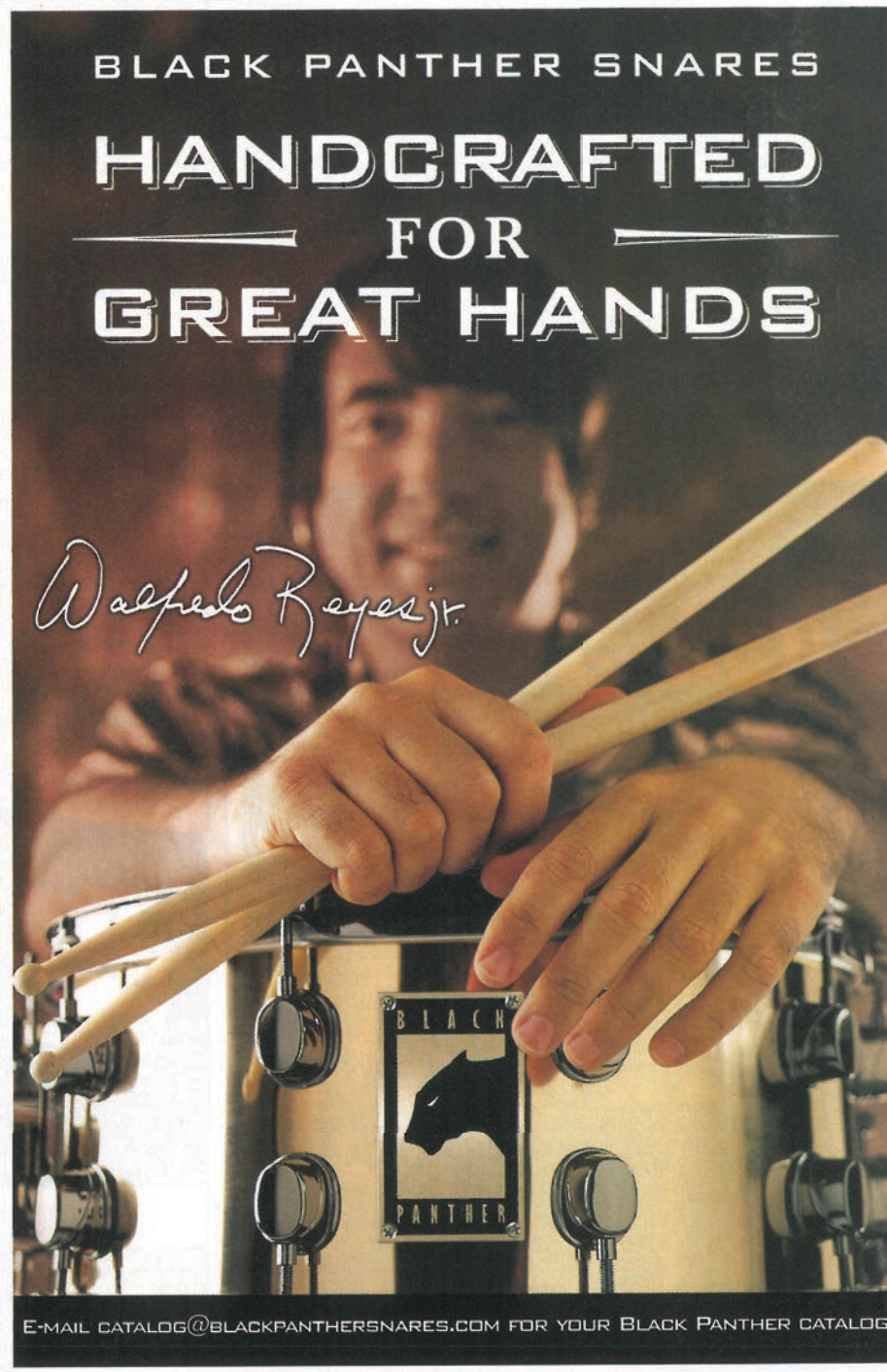
On a really slow tempo, I might play towards the very edge of a cymbal to get more of a washy sound. I also might loosen my grip to allow the cymbal sound to expand. If you play a cymbal with a tight grip versus a loose one, you'll hear the difference. That applies to the drums as well.

MD: Do you tune your toms pretty high?

Bill: Compared to your average drummer, they're on the high side. I tune my drums so they sound resonant and clear within the types of music I play. I like each drum to sound different from any other on the kit. Sometimes I'll hear a drummer with five drums that don't sound all that different from one another.

MD: Do you also choose drums that have distinct tones?

Bill: I use conventional jazz sizes, although I did just add a 16" floor tom for a number



of gigs. I use it a lot on the Scofield CD. It gives me a low presence—and I really enjoy that. Plus it doesn't change my setup. If I added a second mounted tom I'd have to move the ride cymbal over to the right, and I don't feel as comfortable having the ride cymbal further away.

MD: I understand that you've been working on designing some prototype ride cymbals with Zildjian. What qualities are you looking for?

Bill: A complex sound, but a certain dryness as well. That's a hard combination to get. I also want a cymbal that I can get different sounds out of—a cymbal that rides as well as crashes great. I hesitate to call a cymbal a ride or a crash, because to me a good cymbal should have all different kinds of sounds. I'm looking for all of those characteristics, as well as a nice warm sound.

MD: What types of things do you practice now?

Bill: When I have time, I try to get into a routine. I practice whatever needs work at that particular time.

MD: Some of the figures you play on the Scofield record are very intricate. Is it all simply about having command over things like the rudiments?

Bill: I practice playing the *drums*. Some people practice out of a snare drum book or something like that. And I did a bit of that coming up. I worked on Anthony Cirone's *Portraits In Rhythm*, which has a lot of good dynamics in the pieces. That's good for control. But since I'm an improvising musician, many times I'll improvise on an idea that I'll read out of a drum book. That not only gives me the practice of playing dynamics or whatever I'm working on, but also the practice of coming up with ideas in the moment.

As far as playing ideas around the drums, I've spent a lot of time working on getting around the drums as efficiently as possible. I've worked on getting from one drum to another and hitting each drum where I intend to hit it. I've also worked hard on being able to do that at soft as well as loud volumes.

MD: You have such command over single and double strokes, listeners can't be sure when you're playing one or the other.

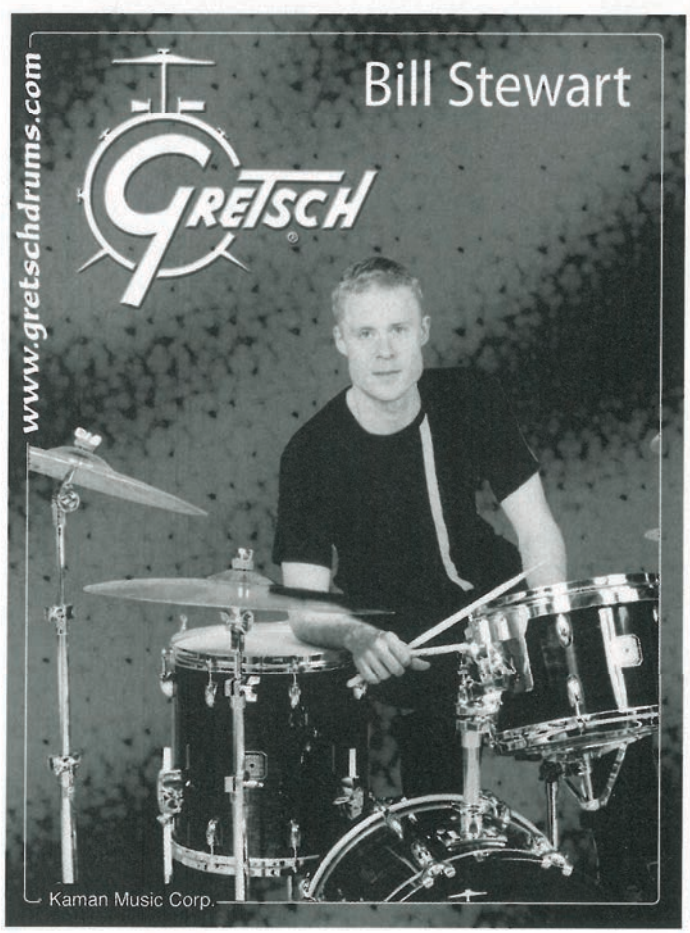
Bill: To my ear, single and double strokes have a different sound. That said, I can't always tell what another drummer's sticking is. In general, doubles have a more effortless sound. Singles have a clarity—and sound more labored—like you have to hit harder to get the sound. I know people try to get the same clarity with their doubles as well as their singles, to match the second stroke to the first. That's a good thing to practice.

MD: You also have good posture, which is not always the case with jazz drummers.

Bill: I've seen videos of myself where the posture doesn't look so good. But I do try to set up my drums at the appropriate height. Fortunately I don't have any back problems at this point, but a lot of drummers do when they get older.

MD: Are there different ways to strike the drums for different sounds?

Bill: I often play the snare drum off-center, about two inches from the rim. I like the overtones you get towards the edge. I like to play buzz roles out there too. I like to be able to get some different sounds out of the snare drum, which is why I don't like those



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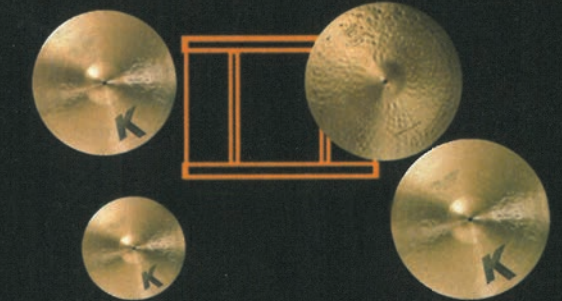

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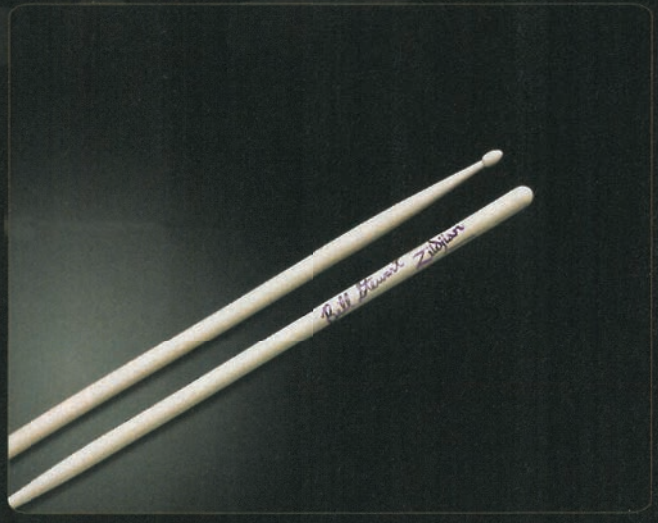

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heads that have the muffler rings on the outside edge. They take away those overtones and make the whole surface of the drum sound the same. That's why I use resonant heads without any muffling.

MD: What's your basic brush pattern?

Bill: I'm a counterclockwise guy. I studied with Horacee Arnold at William Paterson College [now University], who showed me a basic counterclockwise motion that I found very helpful. It works well for me because I play with matched grip. Counterclockwise gives me room to move away from my body, whereas with the clockwise motion you have to come across your body. That can be a bit awkward with matched grip.

Back Listening To Tracks

MD: Can you comment on your solo in "Name That Tune" from *EnRoute*? Is there any recurring rhythmic theme?

Bill: Not as much as I would like. But there's a little bit of superimposition of different meters—usually five and six. That's something I've been doing for a while, although I suppose that when I do something like that now I'm able to follow through with it better.

MD: In "Hammock Soliloquy," you seem to have more of a painterly, impressionistic approach on the first half of the tune with buzz rolls and cymbal trills—more accompaniment than just timekeeping. What dictates that approach?

Bill: I didn't play a repeated pattern there, but you can keep time without repeating a pattern. You can sort of hear the backbeat in there, but it's not anything I'm stating clearly. John has a lot of material that falls in between different styles. It might be in between even and swung 8th notes. I've played things with him where it almost sounds like a New Orleans-influenced style. The bottom line is, I have to be open to a wide range of approaches with John.

MD: What in your estimation needs work in your playing?

Bill: It all needs to get better. [laughs] I'm always thinking about ways to improve. There are peaks and valleys. It's easy to evaluate these things if I hear a recording I'm on or a gig tape. Invariably, I hear things that I wish I could have done better, and that goes for even the best of the records that I've done. There's always something to work on.

MD: Would you say you have a methodical approach to solving these shortcomings?

Bill: I'm not very systematic or methodical in terms of how I work on my playing. For me it's more about coming across ideas I like, developing them, and maybe writing them down later. On the rare occasion when I can practice for a few days in a row, that allows me to get a little groove happening in one aspect of my playing. It could be fast tempos, brushes—any number of things. But I go with the flow in terms of what each day brings me.

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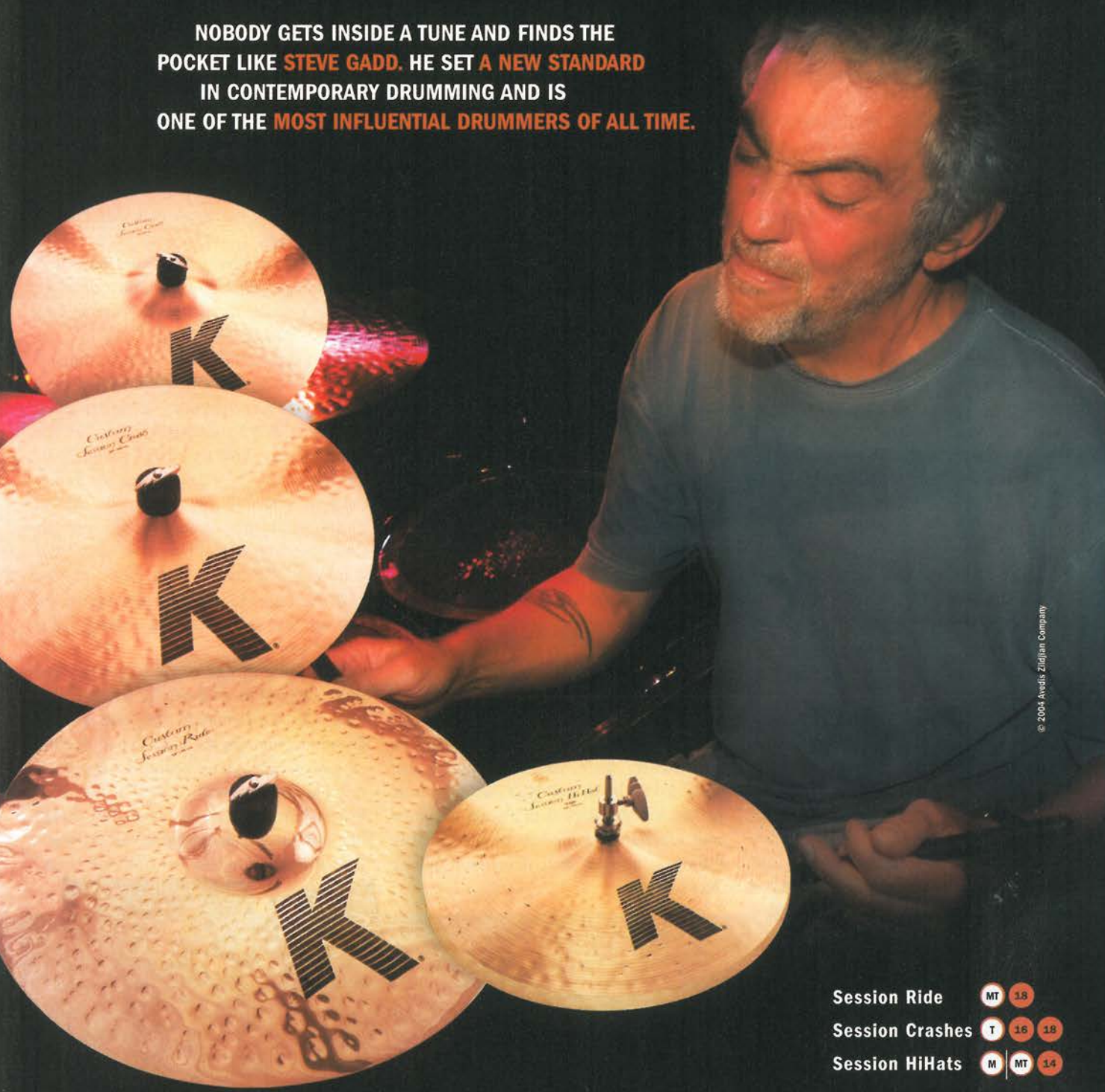

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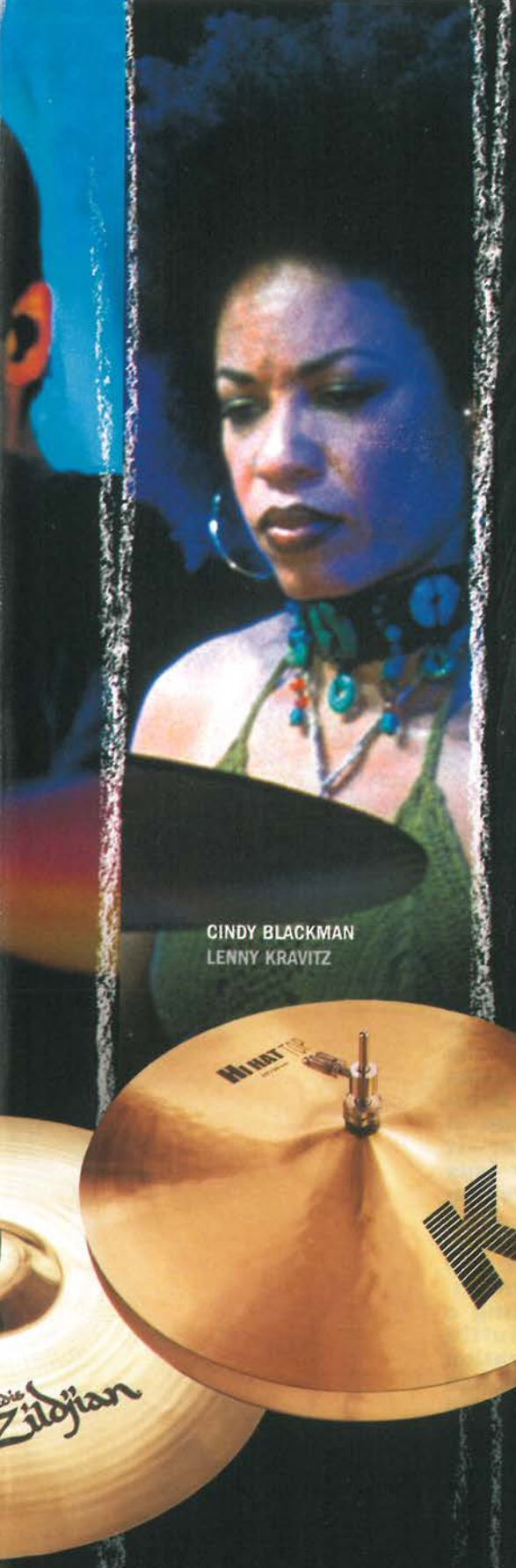

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FEAR FACTORY'S

RAYMOND HERRERA

EMBRACING THE NEW FEAR

Story by Gail Worley Photos by Alex Solca

BAD BLOOD AMONG MEMBERS CAN DESTROY even the most fiercely committed band quicker than creative differences, acrimonious label relationships, or poor album sales. When irreconcilable differences between Fear Factory vocalist Burton Bell and guitarist Dino Cazares split the LA-based group in 2002—after a decade together—it felt like the end of an era for fans of this wildly influential, genre-bending metal band.

In the months after the breakup, bassist Christian Olde Wolbers and drummer Raymond Herrera continued to work together, recording a four-song demo that would fulfill Fear Factory's contractual obligation to its then label, Roadrunner. Unable to find a suitable vocalist to fill Bell's shoes, the two approached him about adding vocals to the demo. Finding their creative chemistry still very present, the trio decided to give Fear Factory another shot.

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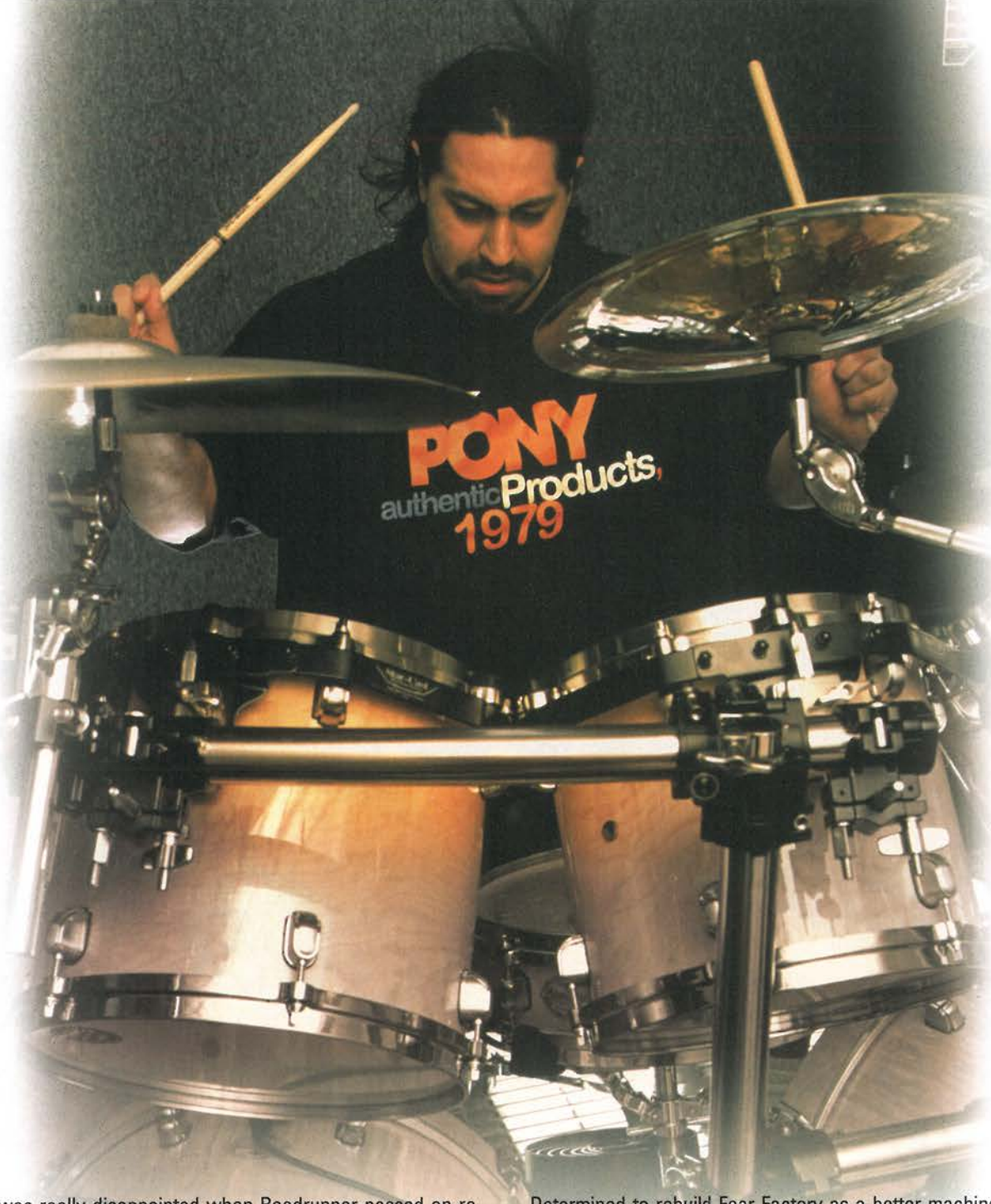


No one was really disappointed when Roadrunner passed on re-signing the band; it meant that Fear Factory was truly free to start fresh. With Wolbers assuming the role of lead guitarist, Bell felt confident that Fear Factory's musical integrity would be maintained as long as Herrera was on board. "From the beginning of this band," says Bell, "the essence of Fear Factory was Raymond's drumming. He's a *machine*. We've always known that if you just follow Raymond, that's a Fear Factory riff. He's the key to how we keep this band's signature sound."

On the phone from his home in Los Angeles, Raymond Herrera explains his integral role in the songwriting process. "When you listen to Fear Factory songs, you can tell a drummer wrote a lot of the music," he says. "The beats and patterns that I do *are* the rhythms the songs are built around. When we write music, I get together with Christian and we just start banging out all of these different rhythms and ideas; then we take it from there. Most bands write music with the guitar, and the drummer follows that. Our approach is more about coming up with a rhythm on the drums and building around it."

Determined to rebuild Fear Factory as a better machine the second time around, Bell, Herrera, and Wolbers entered Rumbo Records studio in LA to record Fear Factory's fifth full-length album, *Archetype*, a disc that continues their unmistakable sound. Already drawing rave comparisons to the band's groundbreaking 1995 release, *Demanufacture*, *Archetype* is not only worthy of Fear Factory's legacy, the record also marks an important next step in its evolution. With the new machine ready to shift into high gear, Fear Factory found a home at Minnesota-based Liquid 8 Records. And now Byron Stroud of Strapping Young Lad has signed on as Fear Factory's touring bassist. Things are, as they say, falling into place.

"We're really happy with the way everything is going," Herrera says, "especially since we've regained control over the direction we want to take the band. Much of that was taken away from us over time while we were with our former label. Now we're back in charge of everything, from business dealings to what we want to do with the music—the entire package. Fear Factory is so much healthier now. It's an amazing time for the band."

MD: Do you get much feedback on the influence of your drumming, and do you in any way feel like a pioneering drummer?

Raymond: Over the years, I've definitely gotten a lot of pats on the back for what I've done. I've been shown respect from many different drummers—guys I grew up listening to as well as new drummers who grew up listening to me. I've actually heard a few bands where I can tell the drummer took ideas from what I do, and I think that's awesome. It's really flattering. The music I grew up listening to has made me the drummer I am today. If other people coming up are listening to what I'm doing, they're going to take my ideas and whatever else they listen to and create something different for themselves. It's just this drummer evolution, if you want to look at it that way.

Fear Factory has definitely been part of a musical revolution as well. Some people say we're the reason that nü metal was created. I'm not really sure how to take that, but if that's the case, okay. We're still going to do what we're good at. We've got a fan base that loves Fear Factory, and we want to continue to make those fans happy, make ourselves happy, and just move along.

MD: Who are some of your major influences?

Raymond: Growing up, there was Dave Lombardo of Slayer, obviously. Slayer is one of my favorite bands, and Dave is one of my favorite drummers of all time. Lars Ulrich was also a big influence. One of the things I loved about early Metallica was the way Lars wrote his drum parts and the ideas he implemented in their songs.

My biggest influence of all time, though, is Pete Sandoval. When I was still in junior high and high school, he played for a local LA band called Terrorizer. They released an album called *World Downfall*, which, to me, is the ultimate metal, grindcore record. I've been listening to that record since I was fifteen years old, which is when I started playing. Pete later joined Morbid Angel. He's such an amazing drummer. I used to watch him play backyard gigs in LA, back before I even knew what drums were. I was completely blown away by him.

Of course, I also like Dennis Chambers, and I'm a huge Stewart Copeland fan. Gene Hoglan is another guy I love. He's the drummer from Strapping Young Lad. Gene played on a couple of albums for a band called Death, and he played with Dark Angel, which is where I originally heard him. He's one of those guys who can pretty much do it all when it comes to metal.

MD: You hadn't been playing for very long when Fear Factory got together.

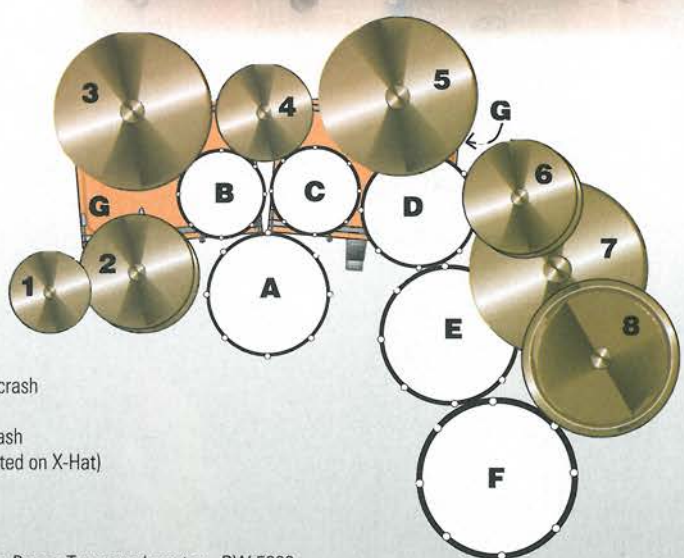
Raymond: When we recorded our debut, *Soul Of A New Machine*, I'd been playing drums for about two and a half years, so I learned quickly. I'd practice at least four or five hours a day, *every* day. It didn't take me that long to get fairly good. It's funny, but when drummers who'd been playing for ten years heard *Soul Of A New Machine*, they were like, "I can't do that stuff!" [laughs]

I moved up to a new level every few months when I first started practicing, because I was by myself, just trying to learn where the drums were and how to hit them. Being able to play the drums without *looking* at them was my first step. What I wanted to learn the most, though, was double bass. In the metal world at that time, I thought a lot of the drummers were doing the same double bass patterns—just straight double bass—one-two fast beats, with rolls in between every four bars. As much as I like that, I wanted to change it. The other thing I didn't like about metal was that the sound quality of the records—especially the drums—was always really bad. That's when I started looking into triggers.

MD: Let's talk about that.

Raymond: Around 1991, before triggers entered the mainstream, I asked myself, "How can I get my drums to sound like a Depeche Mode record but still be sick and fast?" I wanted to get all of the drum machine sounds that Ministry and Nine

FACTORY PARTS



Drums: Tama Starclassic in maple brown finish
- **A.** 4x14 wood snare
- **B.** 8x10 tom
- **C.** 10x12 tom
- **D.** 11x13 tom
- **E.** 16x16 floor tom
- **F.** 16x18 floor tom
- **G.** 18x20 bass drum

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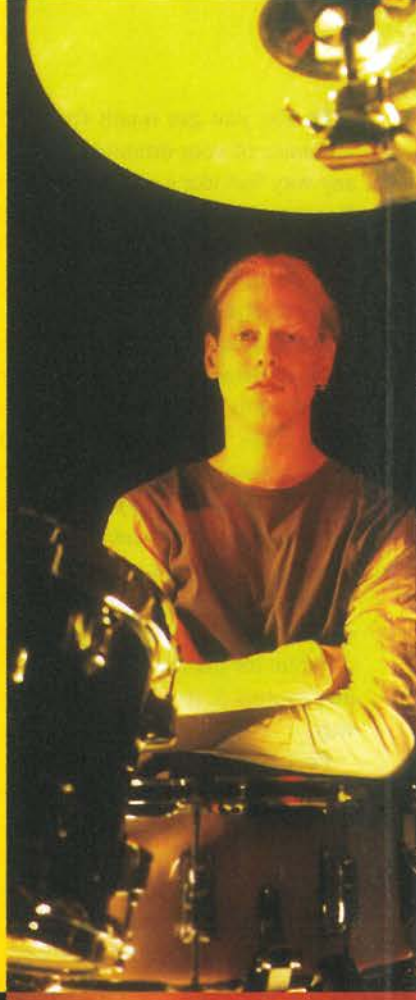
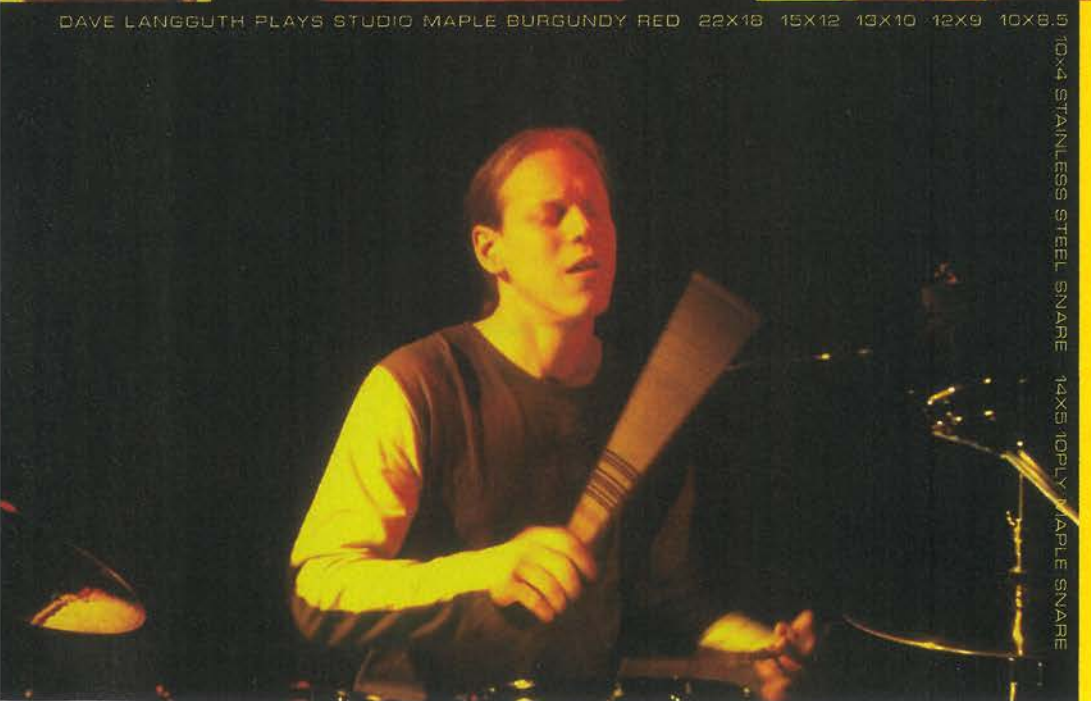
Hardware: Tama, including a Power Tower rack system, DW 5000 bass drum pedals (springs tensioned all the way)
Heads: Attack 2-Ply medium clear on all batters, 1-Ply thin on snare bottom, 1-Ply medium on tom bottoms (snare drum and bass drums tuned high for quick response, toms have medium tuning)
Sticks: Pro-Mark Millennium II 5A model (Japanese oak, nylon tip)
Electronics: ddrum 4 brain, ddrum triggers (on kicks only), ddrum pads, Tama RW100 Rhythm Watch

DAVE LANGGUTH

NELLY FURTADO



DAVE LANGGUTH PLAYS STUDIO MAPLE BURGUNDY RED 22X18 15X12 13X10 12X9 10X8.5



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Inch Nails got, but I wanted to be able to play as fast as Dave Lombardo or Pete Sandoval—and I still wanted to play the *drums*. Pads just don't feel natural to me.

I had heard about using triggers, so I investigated and discovered I could get digital sounds out of my drums without playing pads. On *Soul Of A New Machine*, I used triggers on the kick drums only. Over the years, I've gone from barely using them to using them a lot, like on *Demanufacture*, *Obsolete*, and *Digimortal*. But on *Archetype*, I didn't use any triggers in the studio.

MD: When you trigger your kick drum sound live, does that help you with your speed, in that you don't have to play as loud?

Raymond: Yes and no, because you can set triggers two different ways. You can set them to always have the same impact, where no matter how hard you hit, you get the same balance. Or you can have it vary and be natural. When the sound is set to one level, it's very mechanical and machine-like. On the faster songs, I generally want it on that setting. That way, regardless of how hard or soft I hit, you're still going to hear the drum. I've tried it both ways and both settings have their own special nuance.

I've used triggers live for a couple of years, but from here on I've decided not to do that anymore. I've come to realize that some people think using triggers means I don't actually play the part, that I hit it once and the trigger does it for me. That's not the case. A trigger is just a sensor that senses what you're physically playing. I'm getting fed up with the whole idea that people think I'm not actually playing my drum parts. On this tour, the *only* thing I'm triggering live are the kicks, but we're blending them with the mic's. We do that because some of the patterns I'm playing are so fast, if I had to depend on a mic' for sound, it wouldn't cut through. I need the "click" sound from the trigger to get the high end and to be able to define what I'm playing.

"I'M FED UP WITH PEOPLE THINKING I DON'T ACTUALLY PLAY ALL OF MY DRUM PARTS. I TRACKED EVERYTHING LIVE ON THE NEW RECORD."

MD: How much are your recorded performances Pro Tooled?

Raymond: On this record we used very little Pro Tools, because we learned our lesson with *Digimortal*. I could have programmed that entire record and it would have sounded exactly the same. On *Archetype*, I was like, "No way, we are *not* going back to that." As much as I love *Digimortal*, the drums were really stale, because everything was so perfect. On *Archetype*, we wanted to go back to the reason people love my playing in the first place—because they want to

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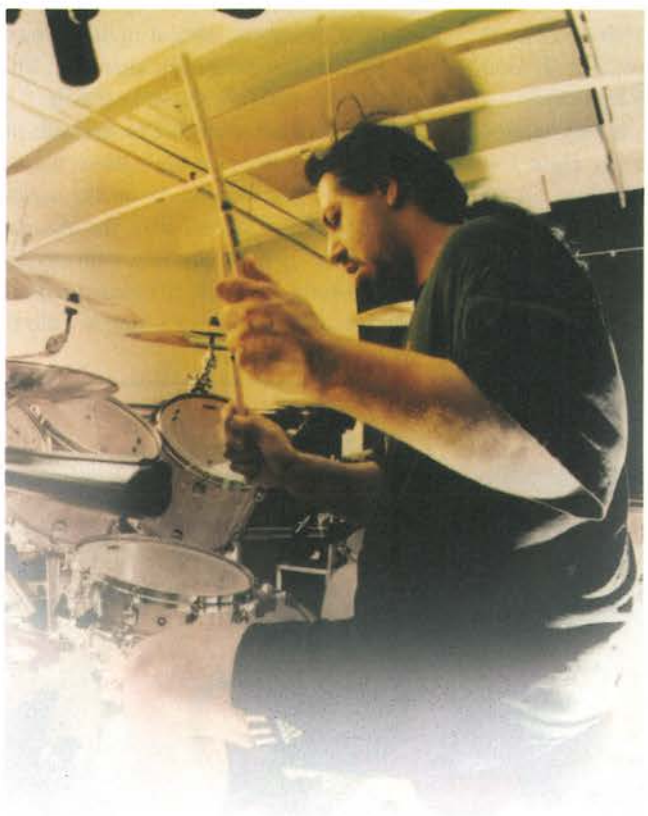
actually hear *me* play and not some computer.

I tracked everything live, and I have video footage of me playing all of the drum tracks. So if somebody says, "Oh, he couldn't have played that," I'll just bust out the video. [laughs] The thing is, other drummers and people who know drums intimately will be able to hear tiny mistakes if they listen closely.

MD: With so much demanding double bass work on the record and in your live performances, do you do any physical activities that help your power and speed, besides actually practicing double bass?

Raymond: I've worked out with weights on and off since the seventh grade, so I've always been on the fit side. I try to do a lot of cardio stuff, like Stairmaster and biking. It *definitely* helps, especially right before I go on tour, which is when I try to do a bit more than I normally would. Instead of doing twenty or thirty minutes, I'll do forty-five minutes to an hour. That helps me so much, because it just opens up the lungs, so when we do a long set I'm not dying.



MD: Not only is your double bass work incredibly fast, it's extremely precise. Can you share some playing tips for developing both speed *and* accuracy?

Raymond: One thing that really helped me generate better speed was working on broken-up kick drum patterns rather than straight double bass. The problem with straight double bass is that it gets boring after a while. By doing *patterns*, I started to feel muscles in my legs that I'd never felt before. When you practice that way and then go back to "regular" double bass, it's so easy to do that you automatically become faster.

I noticed that starting out, when I was trying to get a certain speed with regular double bass, I just couldn't get there. When I *could* get there, I couldn't do it for very long because I'd get tired. By practicing patterns, it brought out something else in the way I play and it built different leg muscles. It's like a different mentality, and it's a *lot* harder to do.

If you try to do a double bass pattern at 200 bpm, it's not that difficult. But try to do a rudiment on the bass drums at 200 bpm and it becomes a whole different ballgame. Then, when you go back to straight double bass, all of a sudden doing 210, 215, or 225 isn't really that difficult.

As far as my precision, that's just something I've worked on. Fear Factory music is very precise, so the only option for me was to become precise. There are lots of little parts in Fear Factory songs, where I'm doing all of this really sick stuff. Then, all of a sudden, I've got to mute a cymbal with my hand. That's one of my trademarks, too; when a song stops, I *literally* stop everything. I clamp down on my cymbals and everything stops.

Accuracy comes from me playing each individual part over and over. For example, there's a song on *Archetype* called "Corporate Cloning." In one part, we go

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from the bridge back into the verse. When I do that, my hi-hat is open and I have to close it—but I *just* finished playing a double bass part. So I have to quickly take my left foot off the left kick and bring it down on the hi-hat. I had to practice that part about forty times until I got it perfect.

The reason I'm very tight and precise on all that stuff is I work on those parts so they stand out. As a result, when I go in to record, the engineers don't have to piece together a performance or mess with it; I can just play it. This also allows me to be able to play everything live. That's how I became this type of drummer, by consistently practicing those little sections to make them tighter.

It's worth pointing out that when you're going to do a lot of precise work on the drums, especially in the studio, it may be a good idea to put tape on some of your cymbals, because that deadens them. That way, when you go to play a tight section, the tape will cut down on the ring. Another thing is set your hi-hat a little more closed than you normally would, because that will stand out a lot on tight sections. If the hi-hat's wide open, it's going to take longer to close it up. Those are just little tips. But when you're playing something that tight, split seconds actually make a big difference, believe me.

MD: The riff between the drums, bass, and guitar on "Default Judgment" sounds like it's based on a paradiddle.

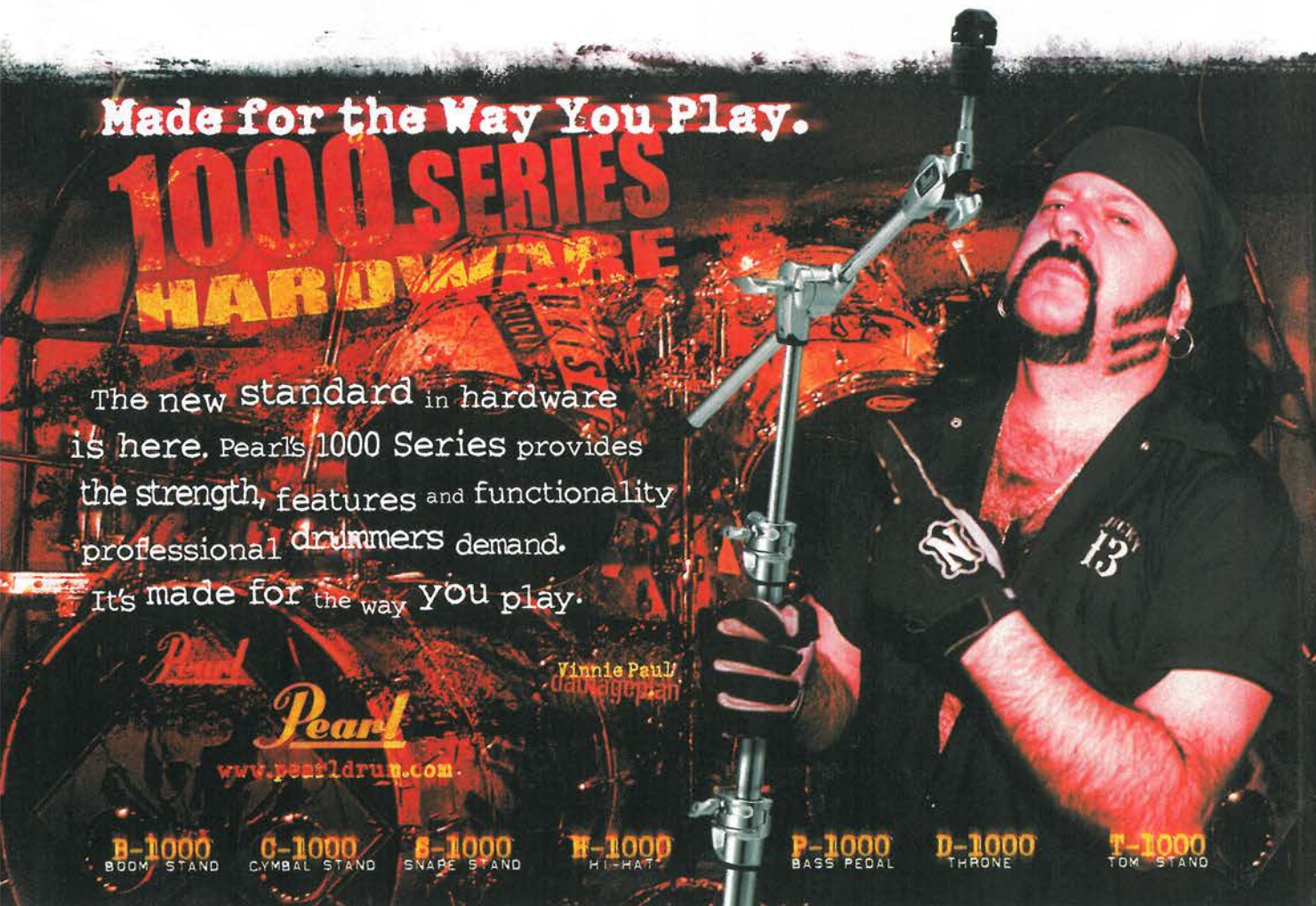
Raymond: You could say that. It's a snare, kick, snare, snare—just a typical rudiment. I actually wrote the main riff to that song in the back of our tour bus using an Akai MPC, a little drum machine. I just panned that rhythm out, with the kick and the snares alternating the riff. When Christian heard it, he was like, "Oh yeah, that's pretty dope." He played the riff on his guitar and it was exactly what I had programmed on the drums.

MD: When playing rapid 16th notes on the bass drums, like on the tune "Act Of God," which foot do you lead with and why?

Raymond: That's actually a very interesting question. I lead with my right foot, because I'm right-handed. But on this album, I started to do something I'd never done before. The reason I changed my approach was I started writing this record on a drum machine. Most times, when you start to play a drum pattern on your kick drums, you start on a downbeat with the right foot. That's the way I used do it. On *Archetype*, I started to do patterns on an upbeat rather than a downbeat.

When you listen to the kick drum pattern on the first song, "Slave Labor," that's one of the sickest kick drum patterns I've ever played, and it's the hardest one I've ever had to do, *ever*. I wrote that at four o'clock in the morning. I was so excited about it I could hardly sleep that night. The next day, I played it for Christian and told him, "I don't even know if I can play this." Sure enough, a few days later we went to rehearsal and I *couldn't* play it. It was so hard to do, because when you're playing the rudiment with your feet, it starts on an upbeat; so it's upbeat upbeat, downbeat downbeat, upbeat upbeat, downbeat upbeat. It's constantly changing. That rhythm is so stupid it's almost laughable.

There were times when I've led with my left foot, only because the pattern was so weird that I had to come in on the second beat because the first hit was, for instance, the snare or cymbal. Starting with my left foot is really difficult. I've never given myself so much grief over a song as I did for "Slave Labor." [laughs]



MD: Fear Factory material is quite physically demanding. How do you pace yourself during concerts so that you don't overexert yourself?

Raymond: I try not to head-bang too much. [laughs] I avoid doing more than what the song needs, and I play exactly what's on the record. For example, when I'm up there playing, you'll notice that I try to be as still as possible. I don't jump up on my kick drum, I don't twirl my sticks, I'm just up there to do my job. Sometimes people say it looks like I'm hardly breaking a sweat, but that's because I'm trying to keep my body very still. All the energy has to go to what I'm doing because it's so demanding.

When we're on stage, everybody else is jumping around and very excited. I'm just trying to do the parts, because I know if I get crazy or get my body too physically into it, I'll tire out. I *am* really into it, but physically I just, literally, have to play the songs.

MD: Since your playing is very fast and intense, how specific are you about the tension of your drumheads—in particular on the bass drums—since you play a lot of double bass licks?

Raymond: I like the kick drums a bit on the tighter side, because I need the response to be really quick. The tighter the drumheads, the better the response. But you don't want it *too* tight, because then it's like hitting a wall. For the snare, the head is really tight, again because I need to get that quick response. It feels really good when I've got the snare really tight; I like that sound.

I want to point out that I used to use 22" kick drums, but now I'm using 20s. The smaller diameter makes it much easier to control the trigger sensitivity. When the drum is bigger, there's a lot more kickback and often the trigger can miscalculate one hit for two or even three. You can start getting double triggers, and you don't want that. The other reason I went with 20s is that I don't need to tune them as tight as I would the 22s to get the same feel.

MD: What about your pedal tension?

Raymond: I tension my pedals so the spring is tightened all the way, to get maximum kickback. The downside to that is you get a lot of resistance, which means you've got to kick a little harder. But once you get your rudiments going, you're not really using much of your leg muscles because the pedal is doing half the work, which is the whole idea.

MD: What type of bass drum beaters do you prefer, and do you bury the beater on the head when you play or pull it off?

Raymond: Let me explain my technique. I use DW 5000 pedals. I've been using them since I started playing, believe it or not. Those pedals come with their own beater, and I turn the beater around so that the plastic side hits the head. Then, on the drumhead itself, I use these things called Danmar Kick Pads, but I call them "click pads," because they make a clicking sound when you play them. That's meant to save your kick drum heads from getting torn up, but the plastic from the beater and the plastic from the kick drum together create this great impact sound.

MD: How tight do you keep your cymbals on the stands, and what are your reasons for doing so?

Raymond: I have two splashes: a 12" splash up front and an 8" splash to the left and above my hi-hat. Those are generally a little looser. My crashes are set tighter because I only have two of them. When I need to go back to the crashes, I don't want them flailing around. A drawback with a tighter cymbal is that it rings less, because the tightness also muffles it. But I'm willing to deal with that. The cymbal also tends to crack sooner, since it's not allowed to give as much as it generally would.

My China is totally clamped down. I love that tight sound for a China, where you just hit it and then it's gone. For my hi-hats, I have the one on the right set normally, not too open or closed. The one on the left is constantly changing, depending on the song. My ride cymbal is clamped down, because I need to get the clarity out of it.

MD: Your drumming seems to require that you be constantly in sync with the rest of the band. A lot of that requires attentive listening while playing, particularly to the instruments being fed back to you in your monitor. What is your monitoring situation like?

Raymond: I've been told many times that I should go to in-ear monitors, that once I do I'll never go back. But I've yet to try them. I will try them one day. When it comes to the monitor mix, I just need to have a little bit of everything in the monitors so I know what's going on. Generally, I need a little bit more of Christian than anyone else, because I need to follow the guitar to make sure we're all perfectly in sync.

As for the drums in my monitor mix,

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American Hickory, TH716 Timbale Sticks

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sometimes when a monitor is really big and powerful, I'll get more of my drums than usual, just because it feels killer and awesome. But I don't need to have that much.

There have been shows where I've had no monitors and couldn't hear Christian. I'm fine with that, too. I don't even need the band to do a song. As a matter of fact, when I tracked *Demanufacture* and *Obsolete*, I just went into the studio by myself and used a click track. I know the songs so well; I know all of my parts and where they fall.

MD: You use double bass a bit differently from most guys. You play creative beats and patterns with them, but don't use them to play fills.

Raymond: That's very true. That goes back to what I was talking about earlier. When I was growing up, many of the metal bands had a lot of one-two beats and a lot of tom fills every four bars. I wanted to change that. I took more of a drum machine approach, which is to have very few fills. It's all beat-oriented, kick and snare, and little nuances. I purposely never really used too many toms. On this album, I probably use them more than I have on any other record. Part of the reason for that is the number of comments people have made to me about how cool it would be if I used more toms. I just always wanted to be more beat driven than having a lot of rolls.

MD: Are you very specific about your seat height?

Raymond: I usually have my seat set right in the middle, not too low or too high. But I'm tall, so I'd have to say that I sit a little higher than normal. I like having the seat set so that when I'm sitting down and I put my feet on the ground, my thighs are parallel to the floor. That's the most comfortable for me. When I sit low, I find I use my leg muscles a lot more, and it tends to make really fast parts much harder to play. On the other hand, sitting too high, I can't get as precise as I can if I'm a little lower.

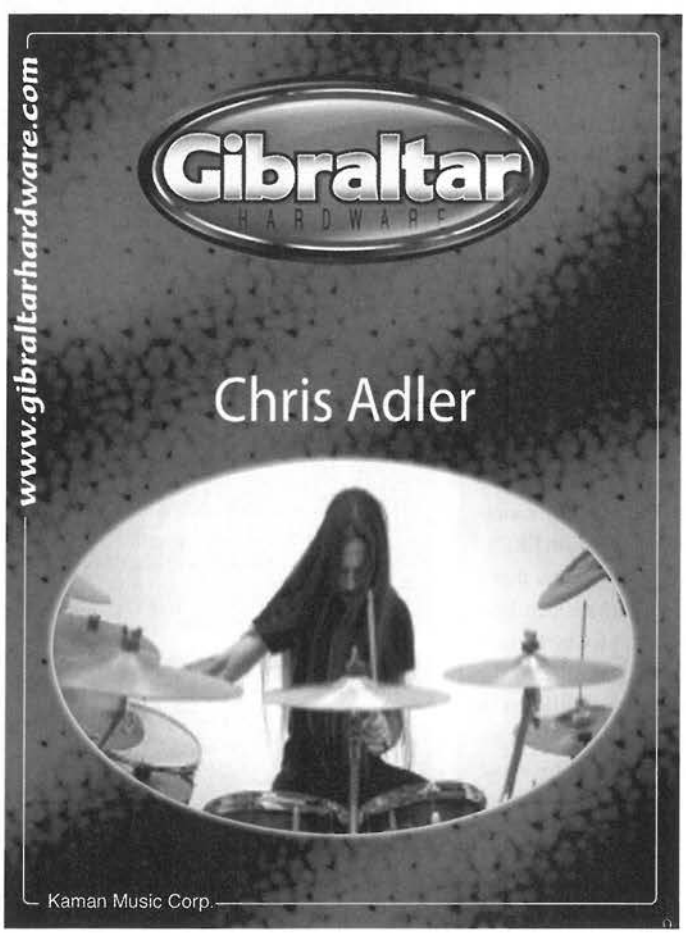
MD: Some guys say they can play faster and get a more consistent sound with a double pedal than with two bass drums. You seem to prefer two bass drums to a double pedal. Why?

Raymond: I started out with two kick drums and I've gotten used to that feel. I've tried double pedals, but the hinges always seem to break on me. Also, when you're playing really fast, it's tough to get your trigger sensitivity set perfectly with a double pedal, because you're putting twice as much strain on one trigger.

As far as sound goes, you can definitely get a more consistent sound with one kick drum, because there's only one drum to tune. But with two kicks, when I trigger my drums, I can trigger the exact same kick drum sound, so that eliminates the problem. I could do any Fear Factory song using a double pedal, but two kicks is just my preference.

MD: It's very inspiring, the way you're continuously challenging yourself.

Raymond: I have to, because with what Fear Factory has created, we've set the bar so high. A lot of bands don't kick themselves in the ass the way we do, but I love that challenge. I like it when people hear a Fear Factory record and they're like, "Wow, he topped his last recorded performance!" I love to leave people wondering what I'm going to do next, because *I* don't even know at this point. I've built this repertoire, in a sense, and I'm running with it. I really want to take what I do to the next level on every record.



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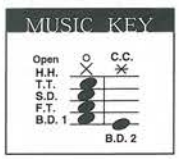
Fear Factory's *Raymond Herrera*

Archetype

by Ed Breckenfeld



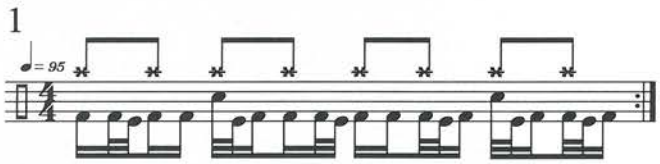
Attention double bass fans! Veteran Southern California metal band Fear Factory is back with a new album called *Archetype*, a title that might well describe Raymond Herrera's head-turning double bass technique. The band certainly knows they have something special here, as Herrera's kick parts simply dominate the album's mix. Check out some of his patterns, and note the tempos that these grooves are played at.

MD Radio

"Slave Labor"

Making a statement right out of the box, Raymond's intricate bass drum part commands attention in the intro of the opening track. (0:10)

1



"Cyberwaste"

Here's another impressive start to a song, as Herrera answers his signature 32nd-note kick flourishes on his snare and tom-tom. (0:00)

2

The verse then shifts to a classic speed-metal beat—and *speed* is the operative word here. (0:40)

3

"Act Of God"

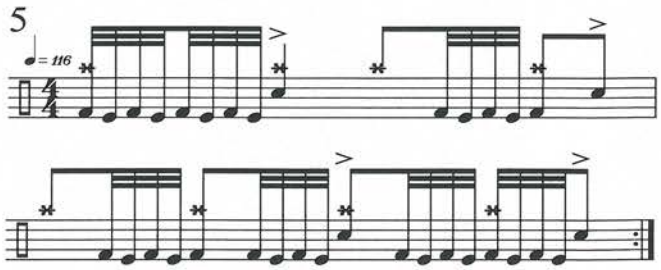
The combination of bass drum 16th notes and quarter notes on the snare drives the verse of this song. The change in the bass drum rhythm keeps the pattern interesting. (0:38)

4

"Drones"

More bunches of speedy 32nd notes on the kick drum show up in the bridge of this tune, along with a nice offset snare pattern. (3:25)

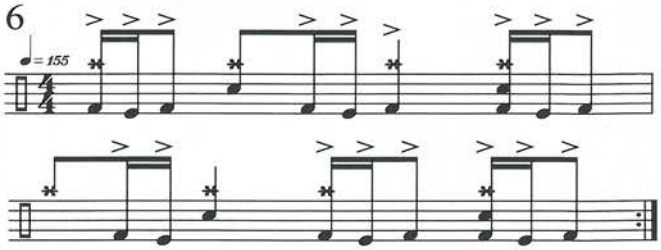
5



"Archetype"

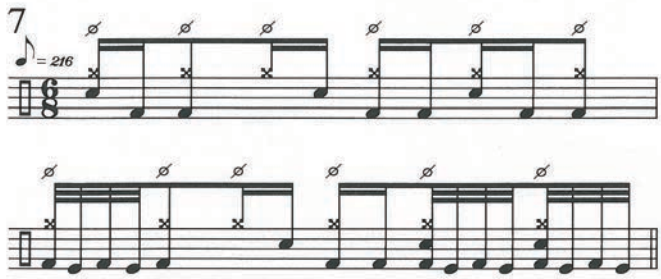
This intro uses a moving rhythmic pattern similar to the opening track, albeit in a double-time feel. Raymond matches these types of beats to guitar riffs throughout the album. (0:00)

6

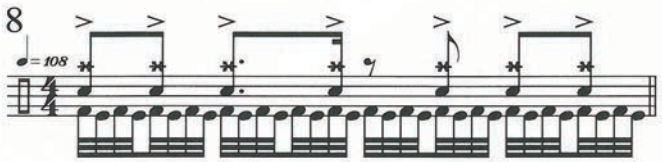


"Bonescraper"

The 6/8 verse of this track gets a dose of Herrera's bass drum magic. (0:24)



The kick drum onslaught turns relentless as Raymond slams home the song's bridge. His precision on this stuff is astounding! (2:10)



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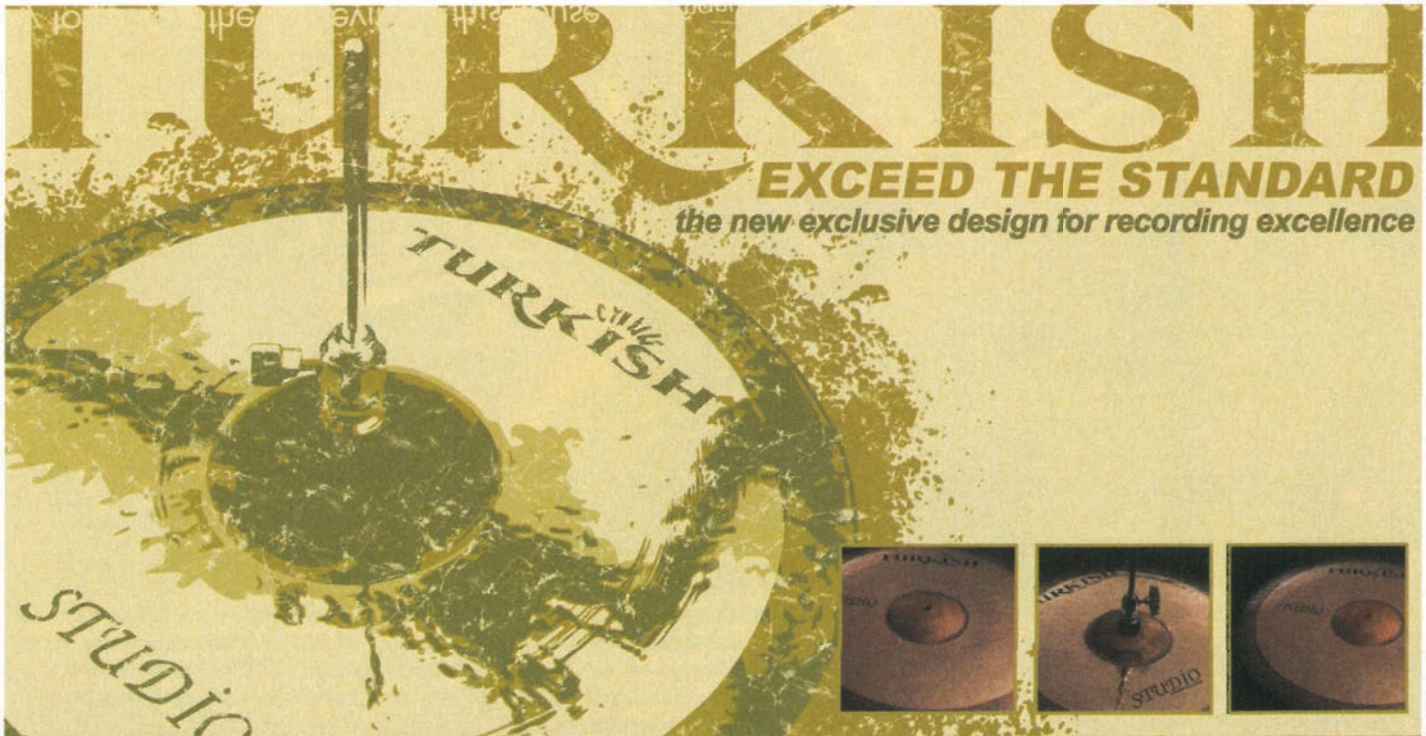

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DRUMMERS PUSH THE ENVELOPE

It sounds easy enough: just grab a couple of sticks, put yourself behind a pair of pedals, muster up the requisite energy level, and begin *slamming*. And perhaps a few decades ago, that's all extreme metal really consisted of—simplistic, automatic machine-gun-fire blast beats with little variation.

Today's extreme metal drumming requires more than simply having the energy and the extra equipment. Constantly surging ahead, extreme metal isn't just getting faster, harder, and louder—it's becoming *smarter*. Sure, there are often evil undertones and plenty of dissonant chord progressions to help chase the blitzkrieg rhythms into their respective positions. But performing extreme metal, in particular on the drums, is just as much an astounding mental exercise as it is a taxing physical workout.

Most of the metal drummers profiled in this article reference one metal drummer as their starting point: Slayer's Dave Lombardo. And rightfully so, as Lombardo and his band virtually introduced the concept of speed metal to the masses via their early-'80s releases like *Show No Mercy*. That disc expanded the fury and power established by more mainstream bands like Iron Maiden and Judas Priest to new—and, at the time, largely unheard of—extremes.

All of the profiled drummers in this article also share a common thread of staying true to their extreme metal roots. Yet each exhibits unique interpretations of the genre. The aspect outside of the extreme metal genre that really unifies these drummers is their thirst for pushing the envelope, which they do through their tireless efforts, creativity, and commitment to the material. And if there's one thing that's certain, it's that performing extreme metal means discarding any boundaries or limitations, physical or mental. BY WALEED RASHID!

MARTIN LOPEZ

OPETH

Paul La Raia

Best known for his work in Opeth (and formerly of Amon Amarth), Martin Lopez has infused a global perspective into extreme metal, melding his strong Latin-based upbringing with contemporary underground metal stylings.

Lopez's performance on 2002's *Deliverance* (Koch) still finds him whipping out the dynamic blast beats and double-kick drives. But the Uruguay-raised drummer often comes across as colorful and tasteful within Opeth's slower-paced compositions, many of which tend to break the traditional rules of the genre. To *see* Lopez in action, check out the band's new concert DVD, *Lamentations*.

With most tracks easily clocking in at ten-plus minutes, Opeth's material is undoubtedly demanding. But Lopez proves that he can rise to the challenge and maintain his position throughout the band's occasionally uneven course.

MD: How early did you get your start in metal?

Martin: I started listening to metal when I was four.

MD: Wow, that's quite an early start!

Martin: Yeah, and since then I've always been into it. I started drumming when I was four, playing South American percussion, Uruguayan drums called tamboril. We have a completely different rhythm and style from the rest of the world, kind of like Africa. I actually toured with a band when I was seven. I finally started playing drums in school when I was ten.

MD: Were you playing both styles?

Martin: I was playing metal and Uruguayan/Latin music at the same time. I could still do it, but metal lets me pay the bills and the Uruguayan music doesn't get me anything, so I have to take metal more seriously.

MD: Are you still playing Uruguayan music when you get a chance?

Martin: Of course, whenever I have the opportunity. Martin Mendez, our bass player, is also Uruguayan, so we'll play some of the rhythms together at soundchecks.

MD: When did you start finding yourself melding metal with more ethnic music?

Martin: I think it was when I moved to Sweden. I moved to a ghetto, where I met several Arabs who showed me all this music and these rhythms that I'd never heard before. I then started showing Mike [Akerfeldt, vocals/guitars] some of the Arabic rhythms, and he was blown away. So we decided to put an ethnic touch into Opeth's music. The Latin stuff just came because it was in my blood, and the Arabic stuff came from hearing it where I lived every day.

MD: So when did you move to Sweden?

Martin: I was actually born in Sweden, but

moved to Uruguay when I was very young. I moved back to Sweden when I was sixteen and started playing with Amon Amarth as soon as I got there.

MD: How does your playing in Opeth compare to what you did in Amon Amarth?

Martin: When I played in Amon Amarth, I played a lot of double bass. But it wasn't that much fun to play live with them because it was so physical. I didn't "feel" that music as much as I do with Opeth. If you're relaxed, close your eyes, and feel the music, it just

continued on page 81

Paul La Raia

MARTIN'S KIT

Drums: Premier Signia Marquis in wine red (with fade to black) finish

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B. 8x10 tom
C. 10x12 tom
D. 12x14 tom
E. 14x16 tom
F. 20x20 bass drum

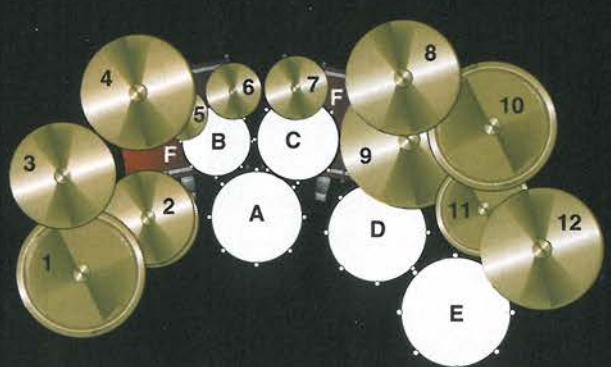
Hardware: Premier double-braced stands, Tama Iron Cobra bass drum pedals with felt beaters (low-to-medium spring tension)

Heads: Remo coated Ambassadors on snare and tom batters (or Pinstripes), Diplomats on bottoms of toms, on bass drums (medium tension, pillow for muffling)

Sticks: Vic Firth 5B model

Cymbals: Sabian

1. 20" Radia Chinese
2. 14" AA regular hi-hats
3. 16" El Sabor crash
4. 18" AAX Dark crash
5. 7" Max splash
6. 9" Max splash
7. 11" Max splash
8. 18" HHX Studio crash
9. 21" ride
10. 20" HHX Chinese
11. 14" Hand Hammered Mini Chinese
12. 19" AAXplosion crash



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CHRIS ADLER

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb Of God's Chris Adler is simply a modern-day pummeling machine, throwing beats ahead and behind himself, as on "Purified" or "Boot Scraper" off the band's *As The Palaces Burn* album (2003, Prosthetic). Even his earlier work on the band's *New American Gospel* disc is highly regarded. In fact, Adler is looked at by other extreme metal drummers as the latest yardstick by which their craft is measured.

Unlike most of his peers, Adler didn't view the drums as a serious profession until he was well into college. But once he and his bandmates found their niche, there simply was no looking back.

Although Adler has been recognized as a drummer who's at the top of his game, his attitude is quite humble. He's constantly mindful of his beginnings, and he's never completely content with his current footing. And it's that cautious attitude of knowing there's always room for bettering himself that fuels his drive and passion behind the kit.

MD: I was reading about how you didn't get your musical start as a drummer.

Chris: I was actually a bass player in the high school band. But during my junior year I saw Shannon Larkin play drums, and he totally blew me out of the water. The next day I sold my bass rig and started saving money for my first drumkit. That was in 1990.

When I went to college, on the floor of the dorm I lived in were both the bass player and lead guitarist of the current line-up of Lamb Of God. We were all at Virginia Commonwealth University together, and we all ended up becoming drinking buddies, hanging out and listening to metal.

The drum thing hadn't really happened for me yet. I played around on the drums in my bedroom, but never felt comfortable trying to play with anybody. After a couple of years I lost touch with those guys. But two or three years later John Campbell, our bass player, got back in touch with me and asked me to get together to make some noise. I was renting a big old house in Richmond, freezing, with kerosene heaters all around, and they came over. I had a five-piece drumkit with a bass drum that didn't have any legs, so I had to keep stopping the song to slide it back into place. Things just kind of progressed from there. I kind of taught myself what I had to learn. That was in '94.

MD: Have you been exclusively with Lamb Of God ever since, or have you moonlighted with other projects?

Chris: It's pretty much just been with this band. As far as my playing goes, it moved from a hobby to what it is today, six or seven hours a day of practice. So it doesn't leave me a whole lot of time to work with anybody else.

MD: So when did this all become a full-time career for you?

Chris: It really started between 2000 and 2001. We signed with Prosthetic Records and made the decision to go for it, and it's paying off. We put everything into the band, and it's coming back to us in spades.

MD: What are some of the most important things you've learned in the past ten years?

Chris: I think that growing up and maturing,

you learn a lot about the business and you gain street smarts. You learn how to handle yourself as a person and how to get around on a lot of levels. You kind of see how other bands roll and learn from their mistakes and their strong points.

MD: How do you stay motivated to continually play your absolute hardest on stage?

Chris: Every single time I take the stage, whether we're playing first or last, I think of that performance as the very last time I'll perform. With that in mind, I give it one hundred percent. There's not some comfort level like, "Here we are, here's what we do…if you like it, great, and if you don't, too bad." We have an underdog mentality, where we need to give it all the time.

MD: What's the single biggest change you've witnessed to current metal drumming, and how have you adapted to it?

Chris: I think the biggest thing is the introduction of Pro Tools. For better or worse, for

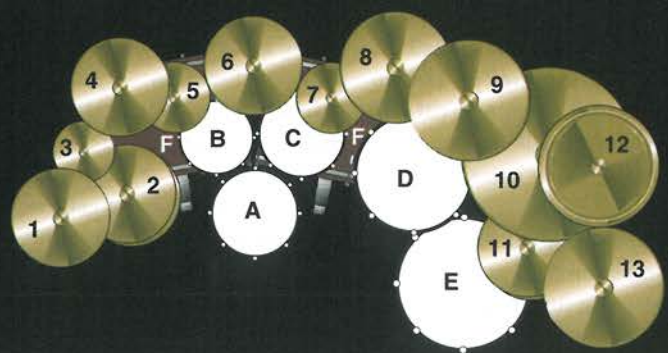
continued on page 81

ADLER'S KIT

Drums: Mapex Deep Forest Walnut
- **A.** 5x12 Black Panther snare (bird's-eye maple)
- **B.** 9x10 tom
- **C.** 10x12 tom
- **D.** 16x16 floor tom
- **E.** 16x18 floor tom
- **F.** 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" Trashformer
2. 14" New Beat hi-hats
3. 6" Zil-Bel
4. 14" A Custom crash
5. 8" A Custom splash
6. 14" A Custom Fast crash
7. 8" A splash
8. 16" A Custom Projection crash
9. 18" A Custom Projection crash
10. 24" A Medium ride
11. 14" New Beat hi-hats
12. 17" K Dark China
13. 18" Crash Of Doom

Hardware: Mapex, with Axis Longboard bass drum pedals
Heads: various Aquarian models
Sticks: Pro-Mark Chris Adler signature model



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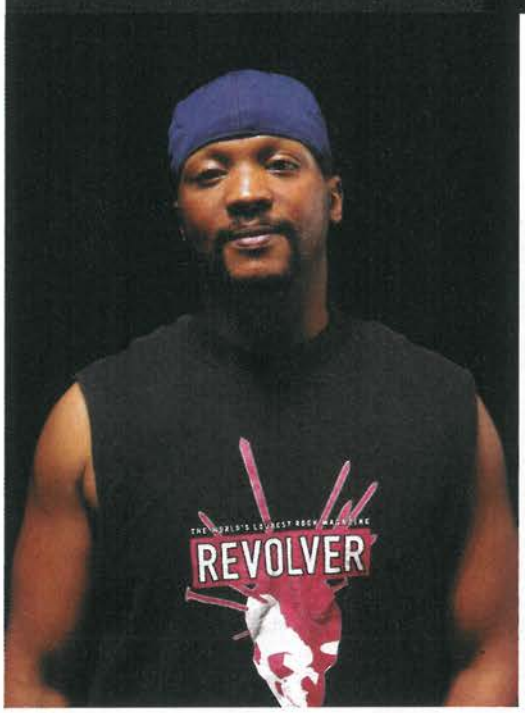
COREY PIERCE

GOD FORBID



With a new album, *Gone Forever*, out on Century Media, God Forbid's Corey Pierce slams away with a frenzy of sucker-punched accents, all the while charging forward without ever looking behind. Listen closely and you'll hear how his drum corps upbringing comes into play through odd-metered patterns and highly syncopated slams.

Actually, Pierce's school-trained, technical background comes into play on a *variety* of God Forbid tracks. His willingness to sample a wide range of elements certainly bolsters his trademark versatility.

MD: Listening to your latest disc, there seems to be a lot of hardcore-inspired passages, like the half-time breakdowns in the verses of "Precious Lie." They seem like very traditional, East Coast/New York–hardcore style breakdowns.

Corey: Actually, I don't listen to much hardcore.

MD: Really, you're not influenced by hardcore?

Corey: No, but a lot of people say that about my playing just because they hear those breakdowns. But most of my influence has been from Pantera. The only hardcore I ever came into contact with was Candiria, and my old roommate used to play in Madball for a while. But I don't really consider Candiria hardcore.

MD: But you must've been raised on some thrash, right?

Corey: I'd say that's a primary influence, but more old-school stuff. Our bass player, singer, and I are all a little bit older, so we came up on really old thrash, like Exodus and Anthrax, plus early Metallica and Slayer.

I like to include bits of everything in our music. There are points that are definitely very straight-up thrash, and there are points that are more groovy, kind of Pantera-style heavy. I'll even throw a little samba groove in there for the hell of it, just because I can! [laughs]

MD: Along those lines, you implement *so* many phrases and styles into one song. How do you organize and arrange the variety of material that you construct? Is there some kind of determining factor in switching gears?

Corey: I don't know if there really is one. It's mostly just about feel. I'll hear a riff and get an idea of how to throw things in. Certain times I'll just know. I'll listen to a riff and play what I feel will make it drive.

MD: Did you always have a knack for playing metal?

Corey: Originally, I started off playing bongos. I got into marching band and then into drum corps. During that time I played the kit very little. For a couple of years, when I was sixteen or seventeen, I played the kit a lot, like in the jazz band at school. My band director was a really smooth jazz player, with good rudimental chops. Most of my stuff came from him.

I don't know if I have a strong jazz influence, though I like jazz and I like to imagine that I can play it. But my approach did come from people who had a tremendous jazz influence, and it just kind of rubbed off on me.

MD: So when did metal drumming come into play?

Corey: My brother was into metal and played guitar. I started listening to some Judas Priest. Then one day I heard Metallica's *Master Of Puppets*, and that kind of set me off. And then it was Anthrax. I was really into Charlie Benante. Then I heard Slayer and was like, "Oh my God, *Dave Lombardo*." So at that point I basically stayed home and learned how to play a bunch of Slayer songs.

When I was sixteen, my mom made the mistake of telling me that I was old enough to determine when I was sick enough to not go to school. So I'd just tell her I was sick and stay in my room all day and practice to "Reign In Blood," "Angel Of Death," and "Chemical Warfare," until I got good at it. I practiced everything on Slayer's *South Of Heaven* record over and over again. And that stuff is really hard to play. But when you're sixteen, all you want to do is play fast.

MD: What was your earliest work in God Forbid like?

Corey: It was all very basic, old-school metal. The songs weren't put together well. But we started getting better as musicians. The guitarist and I would stay up for hours, OD'ing on coffee and Mountain Dew, just listening to a ton of death metal and crazy stuff like Suffocation, Oppressor's *Agony*, Candiria's *Surrealistic Madness*, and Dying Fetus's *Purification Through Violence*. If you start to listen to all this stuff, go without sleep, and have a ton of caffeine, you start to write the most ridiculous stuff. We'd sit there and think up all of these insane patterns. As time passed, we discovered melodies. We

stopped writing stuff that was so hard to lay vocals over. We've been through all the stages.

MD: You incorporate your cymbals into your playing more than most metal drummers do. Given that, are you specific about your cymbal selection?

Corey: It's changed so much with the people I play with. But I find a lot of metal drummers use those cymbals that kind of honk at you. So I try to use cymbals that feature a wide sonic range, from light to very dark. I want something that cuts and is bright, but not too washy.

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COREY'S KIT

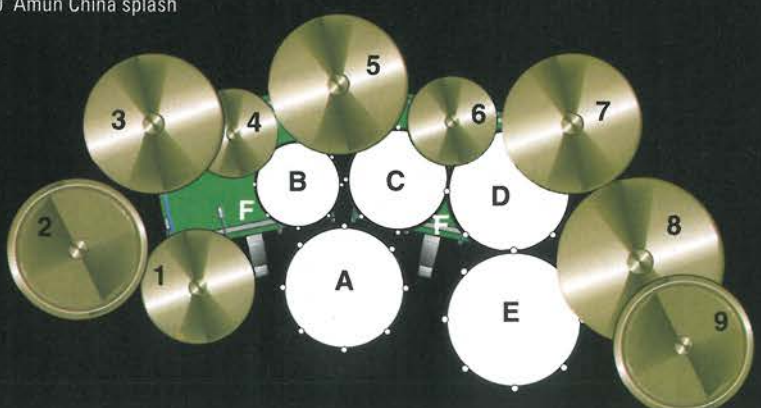
Drums: Premier Genista in Terra Verde Green finish
- **A.** 7x14 wood snare
- **B.** 8x10 tom
- **C.** 9x12 tom
- **D.** 11x14 tom
- **E.** 14x16 tom
- **F.** 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Meinl
1. 14" Raker Mixed Custom hi-hats
2. 20" Raker China
3. 18" Byzance crash
4. 10" Amun splash
5. 18" Raker crash
6. 10" Amun China splash
7. 18" Raker crash
8. 21" Raker Dark ride
9. 20" Raker China

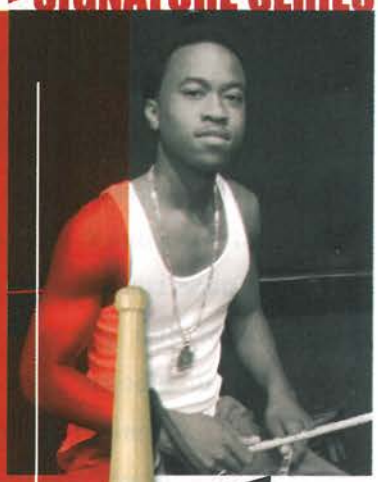
Hardware: Premier, including bass drum pedals (loose spring tension, "Like running in a swamp," Pierce says) with Danmar wood beaters

Heads: Evans Power Center on snare batter (medium tension) with Hazy 300 on bottom, G2s on tom batters with G1s on bottoms (medium tension), EQ4 bass drum batter with EQ3 on front (loose tension)

Sticks: Vic Firth 5A model (maple with wood tip)



>SIGNATURE SERIES



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PAUL MAZURKIEWICZ

CANNIBAL CORPSE

Cannibal Corpse's Paul Mazurkiewicz has set new standards in sheer speed and technicality on the nine albums he's recorded over the past fifteen years. Mazurkiewicz is still considered one of the genre's finest and most popular drummers, appearing on albums that have sold more than a million copies, establishing Cannibal Corpse as one of the only extreme metal bands to ever crack Soundscan's Top-200.

Metal fans truly revel in the feverish tempos and stickwork that Mazurkiewicz has been laying down since launching Cannibal Corpse in the late '80s. And the band shows no sign of wear. They recently released a retrospective box set (aptly-titled *15 Year Killing Spree*) and a proper studio album, *The Wretched Spawn*. Cannibal Corpse's time-honored gory nature and antagonistic vibe continue to match perfectly with the hell-bent aggression of Mazurkiewicz's drumming.

MD: How did you get your start in metal drumming?

Paul: I was probably about ten years old when I got into KISS, which was completely overwhelming for me at the time. But there's also a drumming history in my family. My cousin, who was kind of like an older brother to me, turned me on to a lot of music. He had a drumset at his house. Every time I went over there, I fiddled with it, and that made me want to play the drums. I also have an uncle who played in a polka band in Buffalo, New York.

MD: Well, *that's* quite different from what you ended up playing.

Paul: [laughs] Yeah, it's a little different. But I've seen him play a few times, so drumming is a part of the family. I got my first drumkit at sixteen, and I really wanted to start creating my own music, which was heavy metal and thrash metal. It all took off from there.

MD: Did you start off as a metal drummer from the get-go, or did it take a little time to really find your niche?

Paul: No, it was definitely metal drumming. But I didn't really jump right in to the deep end. We were into bands like Slayer and Kreator, bands that were playing fast. But I'm kind of a latecomer to the drumming scene and to music. There was no way I would be able to play Slayer stuff at that point, so we played stuff by Accept, slower Metallica, and Judas Priest. So it was definitely metal from day one; we just had to build up to what we're doing today.

MD: How long did it take for you to begin feeling comfortable playing the harder stuff?

Paul: When we made our first CD in 1990, I really hadn't been playing drums for all that long. Listening back to our first few albums, we were young and not really in as focused a niche as we are today. We were just very raw. I think it was about '94 when I finally felt that I had gained the ability and the confidence to play in this style.

MD: How did you build your speed to the point you're at today?

Paul: I definitely was self-taught, listening to the stuff I loved and trying to mimic it. It was just a matter of hard work and practice. We practiced a lot as a band too, and we still do. In the early days of Cannibal Corpse, that's all we were about. We were working day jobs, but we'd get off our jobs and come to practice and bust it out for several hours. It was just a matter of everyone pushing themselves.

MD: Did you grow up in the Florida metal scene?

Paul: No, the band is originally from Buffalo, New York. We've been in Florida for about ten years now.

MD: Were there any like-minded bands in Buffalo to perform with and serve as inspiration back when you started?

Paul: Yeah, there were definitely some in Buffalo, back when thrash was so prominent. One band that really inspired me was Leviathan, which our original singer was in prior to joining Cannibal Corpse. Leviathan was like the second coming of Slayer. I remember watching them rehearse and being completely blown away.

So there were bands around, but not like it is in the Florida scene now. We live there now, and there's Deicide, Morbid Angel, and all these other bands that are based there.

MD: In what ways have you seen metal drumming mutate over the past decade?

Paul: There were good players back in the late '80s and early '90s. But now the skill level is incredibly high. Derek Roddy from Hate Eternal and Tony Loriano of Nile are amazing drummers. They're taking it to a new level, along with the drummers from a lot of other bands. I think it's just gotten a lot more extreme in that sense, especially with the drumming. And that's very inspiring to me. By no means am I as technical or insane as some of these guys. But we've stuck true to what we've been doing for years, and that's what has kept the band going.

MD: Looking back, when do you think you were playing at the most extreme level?

Paul: Our third CD, *Tomb Of The Mutilated*, which came out in '93, is definitely one of my faster efforts. It's still a raw CD, but the

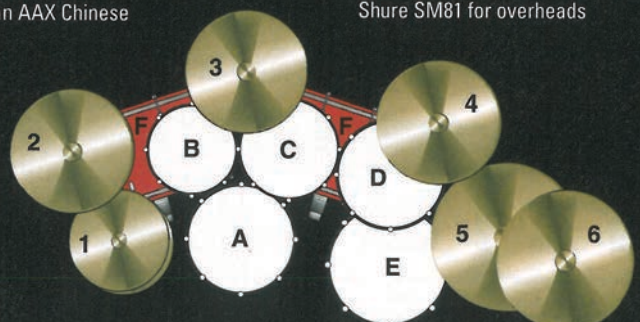
continued on page 83

CANNIBAL KIT

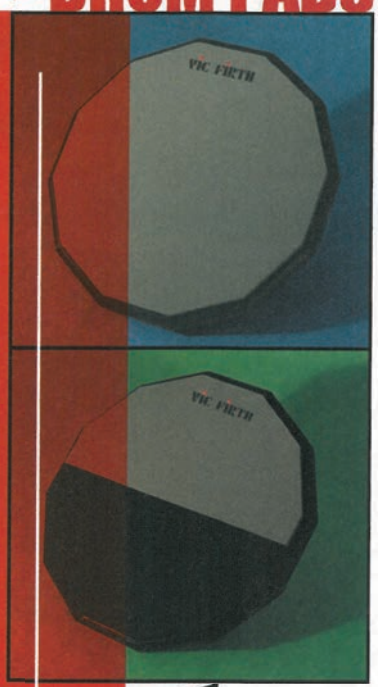
Drums: Tama Granstar in dark red finish
A. 4x14 snare (Pearl Free-Floating)
B. 10x12 tom
C. 11x13 tom
D. 12x14 tom
E. 16x16 floor tom
F. 14x24 bass drum

Cymbals: various
1. 14" Zildjian A Rock hi-hats
2. 18" Sabian AAX crash
3. 17" Sabian AAX crash
4. 18" Sabian AAX crash
5. 21" Paiste Rude ride
6. 20" Sabian AAX Chinese

Hardware: Axis Longboard bass drum pedals (medium spring tension) with Danmar wood beaters, Roc-N-Soc throne
Heads: Remo coated PowerStroke 3 on snare batter (tuned tight, Zero Ring for muffling), coated Ambassadors on tom batters (medium tuning, no muffling), PowerStroke on front and back of bass drums (Remo Falam Slam pads on bass drum heads, minimal muffling, fairly loose tension)
Sticks: Regal Tip Quantum 3000 model (hickory with nylon tip), various foam grips
Mic's: AKG D112 on kicks, Electro-Voice ND408 on top of snare, Shure SM57 on bottom, Electro-Voice ND408 on toms, Shure SM94 on hi-hat and ride, Shure SM81 for overheads



>DRUM PADS



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Hot Metal

Martin Lopez

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comes out of you.

MD: What was the initial attraction to playing fast metal?

Martin: I never really tried doing any of the fast double kick stuff until I heard Slayer—and then I had to do it. So we started playing songs from Slayer's *South Of Heaven*. Eventually, when I learned how to play that fast, I started experimenting and moving forward.

MD: What kinds of pre-show preparation do you do?

Martin: I don't warm up. We do a proper soundcheck, and that takes up enough energy before a show. Of course, you move around a little before you go on, but that's about it.

In the past, if we had more than a week off, I would walk around with weights on my ankles. Then I'd watch TV with the sticks in my hands. But I don't play much drums at home.

MD: Let's talk about your studio work. How much effort goes into writing an album?

Martin: Not much at all. Actually, we rehearsed once for three hours before recording both records. Otherwise, I just learn everything in the studio. They'll show me a riff, I'll get the rhythm and record it, and it continues like that. We're not in a position where we have all the time we want, so I need to do my parts fast. But for the next record, we're going to rehearse and try to make music that's not necessarily technical but more intricate and original.

MD: For those listening to metal and wanting to play, what advice can you share?

Martin: *Don't* only listen to metal. Metal, for me, is the most important music, and I can say it's what I live for. But if you want to be a good drummer, you have to be able to play any kind of music. And that means opening yourself up to different ways of thinking about music and the music of different regions, like Arabic, African, South American, or Asian. I think doing that has made me more than just a metal drummer.

Chris Adler

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a lot of people, Pro Tools can make an average player sound amazing. I don't know how much I have adapted to Pro Tools. I don't use triggers or anything like that. But it's not a negative if people do. I'm the last person to say anything about anyone's drumming. Frankly, I think I'm more inspired today by metal drummers than ever before. It's an exciting time for this music.

MD: I noticed that you don't seem to perform exclusively as a metal drummer. You put some thrash and hardcore punk elements into your mix. Was blending the various elements a conscious effort?

Chris: Well, there's definitely not been any real training, as in lessons. More often than not, what I play is going to sound like something I was listening to when I was growing up, just because that's my background.

MD: What were those things you listened to?

Chris: I grew up listening to pop stuff like Michael Jackson, and then I was a huge Aerosmith fan. After that, it was all about speed metal. And I'm still kind of stuck in that groove.

I'm into more of the weird stuff, but that's sort of the magic of the band—we're not really trapped in one area. We can cross boundaries pretty well at any time, we can come back to what we do best, and we can make it all unique.

MD: How meticulous are you about preparing yourself for the stage?

Chris: It depends. I get so tweaked out about playing that I've gone anywhere from warming up for six hours before a show to not touching anything before a gig. Normally, I'll try to get some kick pads set up to warm up my calves. A lot of the stuff I'm doing is really quick, so it doesn't always work out if I don't spend a little bit of time getting the muscles moving. Recently I've started jumping rope for a little while. I've found that to work really well for me.

MD: Have you always played with two kicks?

Chris: Yes.

MD: Is there a reason you don't like a double pedal?

Chris: It's twofold. I've never had any luck with a double pedal. I could never get it to feel the way that two bass drums do. And I never really put that much time into trying to. [laughs] I love having two drums, and I think the bands I grew up listening to used them. Yes, I have more drums to carry around, which can be a pain in the butt. But that's the way I like it.

MD: What about your toms?

Chris: I use 10", 12", 16", and 18" toms.

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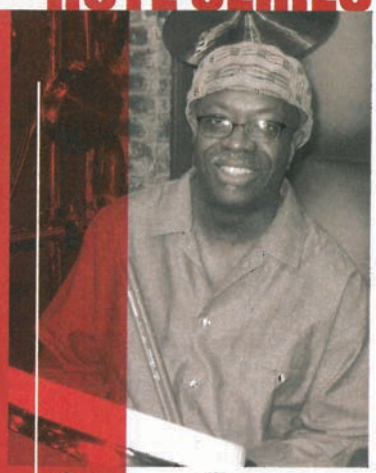

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MD: You're missing a few sizes there between the 12" and 16"—kind of a wide tonal gap.

Chris: Well, I had a 12", 13", 14", 18" setup, but I always had a hard time with the placement of the 14" drum. I found myself taking that off the kit and putting an X-Hat in its spot. Using four drums just made flying around a whole lot easier.

MD: Speaking of flying around, your speed and precision are impressive. Have you found any nagging faults in your drumming that you've been able to overcome with experience?

Chris: I think that working a lot with a click track really helped me. Before I did that, when I'd hit the stage everything would be two to three times faster than it was on record. I'd be amped up and nervous, and all of a sudden I'd be playing too fast. Practicing with a click track really helped that.

MD: When budding metal drummers ask for advice, what are some of the things you tell them?

Chris: I don't know necessarily how to answer that. I think my goal going into this was just to practice and be able to play whatever I heard in my head. I would say to other drummers, don't compromise, just go for it. I mean, I'll spend two hours a day just playing paradiddles with my feet. It's not fun, but I know that when it comes down to playing OzzFest and it's 115 degrees outside in the middle of the day, having that kind of control, desire, and willingness to do that kind of work is going to help me out.

Corey Pierce

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MD: So you're into mixing different models?

Corey: I just signed on with Meinl, so I'm using a bunch of different stuff from them—their Raker series, Amun series, and even a Byzance crash. I don't follow any rules.

What changed my whole mind about cymbal selection was having the opportunity a few years ago to do sound for a Terry Bozzio clinic. He's got all those cymbals. Now, I'm not willing to take it to *that* extreme. But I've realized the ability that cymbals have to create harmony and match tones with the guitars. It makes things so much better when you can recognize those tone differences and match them with the music.

MD: How do you like to present yourself on stage?

Corey: When you see me play, I want to look like a liquid caveman, somebody who's beating the hell out of their drums but looks smooth doing it. You should be able to tell by the motions of my playing that I'm pretty relaxed.

MD: Let's hear about how you got your feet up to speed.

Corey: I used to practice a lot. We recorded a song on the first full-length called "End Two." It's full of 64th-note double bass patterns. There's one section that is very quick. It's not the fastest thing I've ever recorded, but it's up there. There's a section in the tune that's just straight 64th notes on the double bass. When we recorded it, it took me three and a half hours to nail it. It was such a workout that I couldn't walk the next day. But since that day, I don't really have to practice double bass to play fast. That was it for me.

Paul Mazurkiewicz

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adrenaline and intensity is completely off the scale. It was a younger mentality, in that we *had* to be the heaviest and the fastest—speed, speed, speed! Now we're a little older, and yeah, we want to be fast, but we don't *need* to be the fastest. We need to write good songs.

MD: How much preparation goes into your drumming before a gig?

Paul: I like to stretch for about an hour before. I like to get the limbs loose and have some sticks in my hands. For me it's about getting the blood flowing and getting my game face on.

MD: What are some guidelines you've set for yourself in your drumming career?

Paul: You've got to eat right, get plenty of rest, and practice as much as you can. You have to keep pushing yourself. It's just a matter of using your muscles, your wrists, and your ankles, and limiting your body movements. You don't want to over-exert and be spent after two or three songs.

Having the will to do it is the main thing. I know I have it. I'm not the most talented of drummers, but I have the *desire*. And if you really want something, you're going to find a way to do it.

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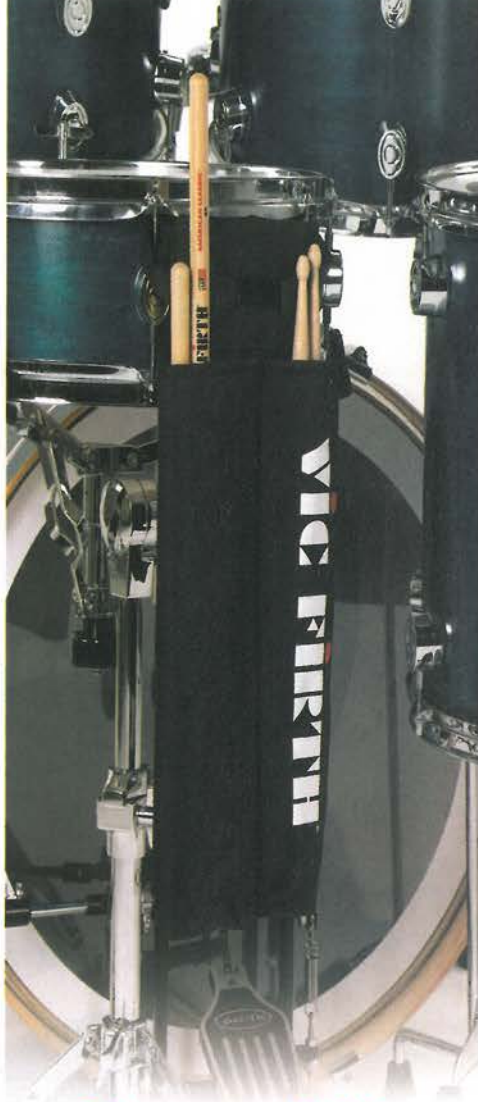

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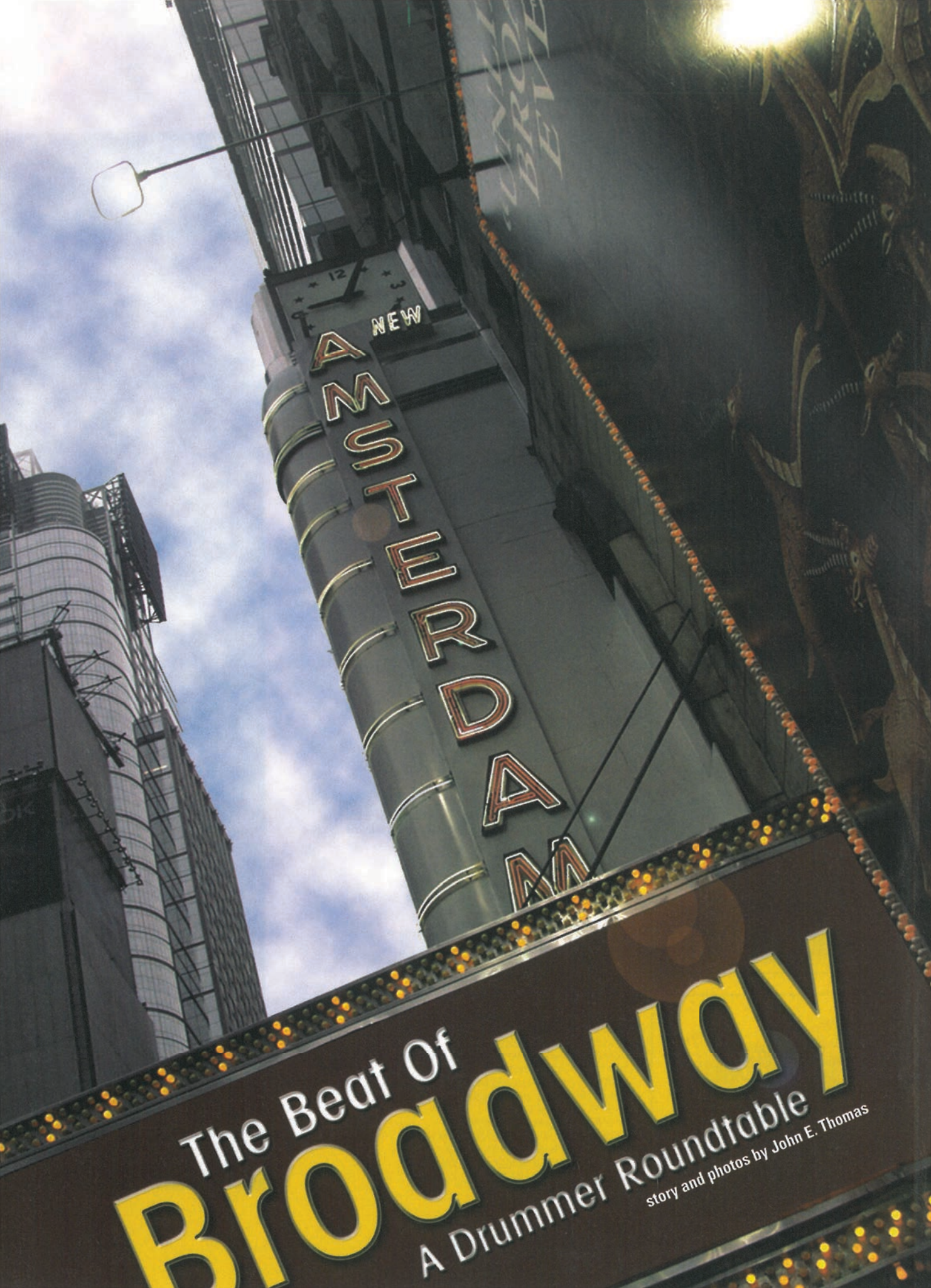


The Beat Of Broadway

A Drummer Roundtable

story and photos by John E. Thomas

With the many hit musicals now on Broadway, deciding which one to see on a weekend visit to Manhattan isn't easy. The diverse musical influences running through the many original shows and revivals draw on centuries of American popular music, as well as on music from other continents.

With all this diversity, the demands placed on Broadway show drummers today are complex. Not only must they come equipped with the skills that Broadway shows have always demanded, they must also bring authenticity to multitudinous musical genres. In the words of one pit player, "The bar on Broadway drumming has been raised tremendously."

Modern Drummer recently conducted a panel discussion with drummers from six hit Broadway musicals: *The Producers*, *Hairspray*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Aida*, *Cabaret*, and *Nine*. The talk focused on each player's show, the demands of his chair, how Broadway has changed, and what aspiring drummers need in order to become successful, first-call show players.

The Drummers And Their Shows

Clint DeGanon anchors the band for the 2003 Tony award–winning *Hairspray*. "It's basically '60s rock," says Clint. "But it's been 'contemporized.'"

At the time of the interview, **Gary Seligson** had just left *Aida* and was in rehearsal for soon-to-open *Wicked*. "*Aida* is very theatrical, heavily orchestrated pop rock," says Gary. "The score was written by Elton John and Tim Rice and includes world music influences. *Wicked* is different. It's composed by Stephen Schwartz, and it's really musical-theater pop with some quirky exceptions."

Larry Lelli describes his super-hit show, *The Producers*, as more of a traditional musical comedy. "It features big production numbers and a big band playing swing tunes and a lot of two-beats," he says. "I'm playing in a twenty-four-piece big band with strings.

John Meyers was drumming for the revolutionary Studio 54 production of *Cabaret* at the time of this interview. (The show has since closed.) "Our music is 1930s-style jazz—mostly two-beats," he says. "It's supposed to be authentic, like German musicians just learning to play swing."

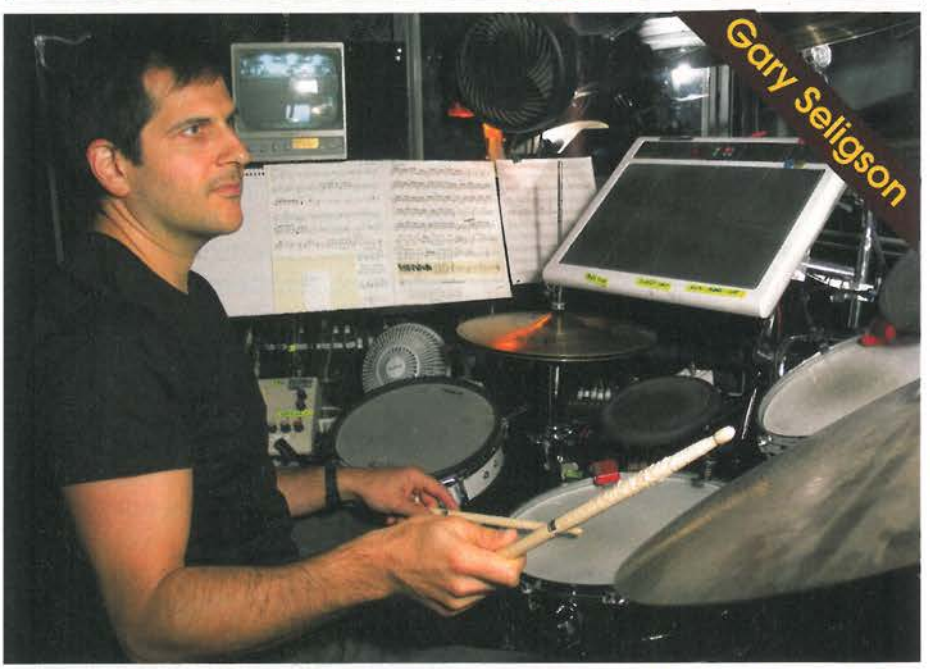
Thoroughly Modern Millie takes its musical influences from the 1920s. "It's extremely quiet most of the time—very acoustic," says drummer **Warren Odze**. "The only amps in the pit are a tiny bass amp and a little guitar amp."

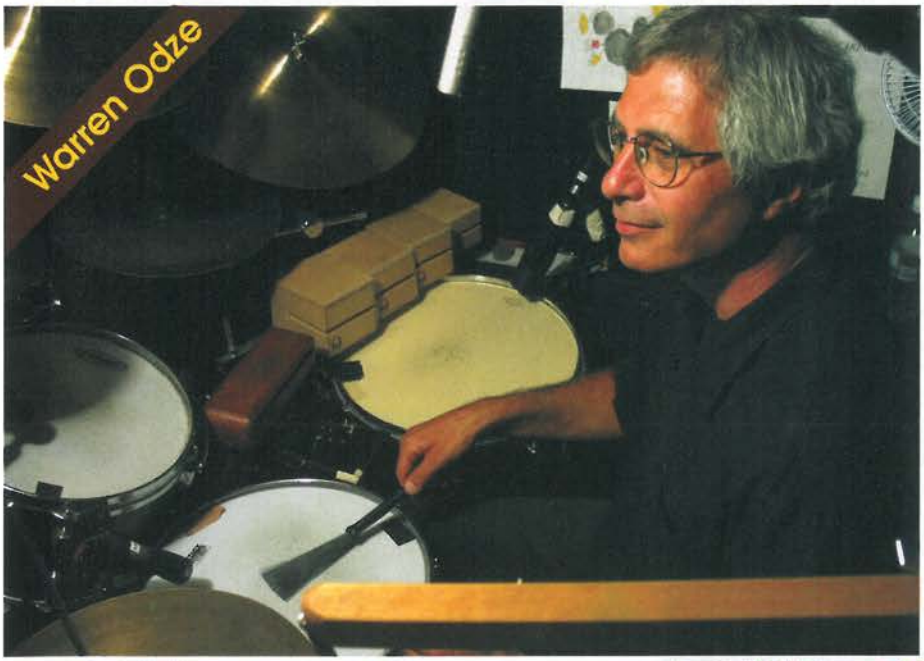
Nine drummer **Billy Miller** says that his show is unique in Broadway terms, because the music is predominantly orchestral. "I'm playing more colors than grooves," says Billy. "There are time feels that could be described as two-beats, but the core of the group is a string quartet. Everything else is just to fill it out and add color." (*Nine* has also closed since this interview.)

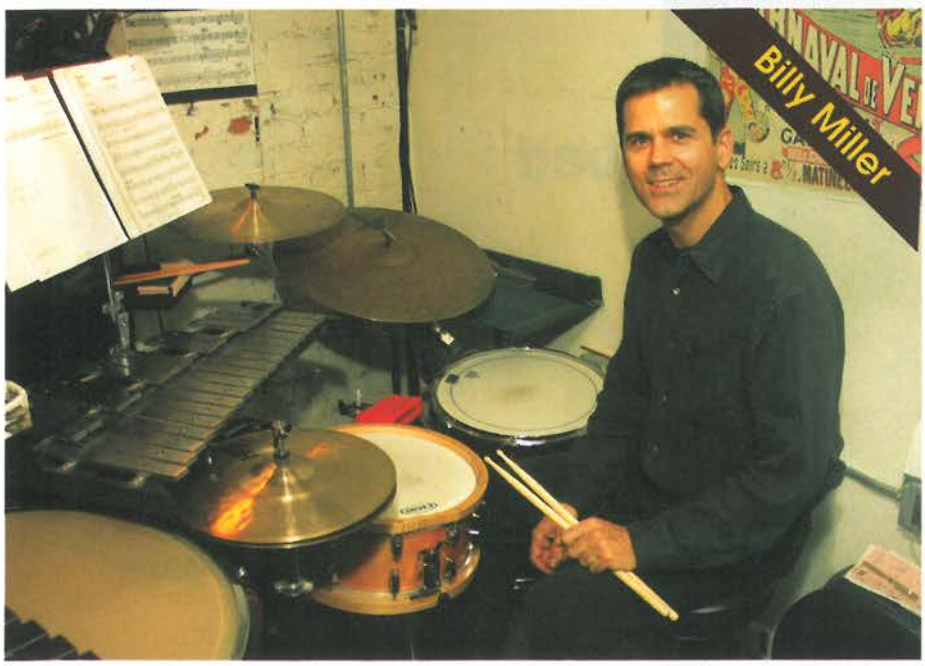
Comin' To Broadway

None of the six drummers on our panel originally had aspirations to be Broadway show players. Each arrived by a different road.

Billy Miller came to New York from Los Angeles, where he played a lot of late-night bar gigs and club dates. "I didn't enjoy that lifestyle," he says. "I realized that a more structured environment—like







theater—was perfect for my temperament. I was also a good reader, so this was a logical destination."

Says Larry Lelli, "I used to live in Nashville, but I was actually on the road with artists all the time. I wanted to stay in town, but I couldn't. It was too tight down there. The session scene is closed, unless you want to string along playing demos for $30 a song."

John Meyers entertained hopes of being a jazz musician while in college. "When I got out it didn't take me long to realize there wasn't a future in being a jazz star," he says. "I'd played theater productions in school and enjoyed them, so I decided to give Manhattan and Broadway a try."

Gary Seligson grew up in New Jersey, and he saw his first Broadway shows with his family. "Playing shows wasn't really something I wanted to do," he says. "But after I moved to the city in 1985, I met Howie Joines through our mutual teacher, Gary Chester. I started subbing for him on the last revival of *The King And I* that starred Yul Brynner. This led to fill-in work on the Radio City Christmas show and *Little Shop Of Horrors*." Seligson eventually toured with *Dreamgirls*, *Cats*, and *Les Miserables*. On returning to New York he subbed on *The Lion King*. This, in turn, led to *Aida*, since both shows used the same contractor.

Clint DeGanon first enjoyed an extensive touring and recording career. "I was on the road for years with different artists," he says. "But I got frustrated with the times off. So my decision to play shows was a deliberate career change."

Warren Odze had also logged countless miles as a touring drummer. "I spent many years on the road with famous people," he says. "And I'd come home and be struggling to get on a health plan or pension. Then I had kids. I needed something more stable."

Working Conditions

Job stability is one of the most attractive features of a Broadway gig. "Where else can you play near your own zip code, eight times a week, to 1,700 people willing to pay $100 to see a show you're playing drums for?" says Clint DeGanon.

All Broadway show drummers must belong to Musicians Union Local 802 in Manhattan. Clint DeGanon prefers a union-regulated working environment,

even if it makes breaking into Broadway slightly more complicated. "The union protects employees from employer abuse," he says. Larry Lelli adds, "Unions also help to ensure that musicians are paid fair wages." And, according to Warren Odze, "The pension plan is amazing. There's a health plan and hospitalization."

"Of course," adds Gary Seligson, "all the job stability and benefits depend upon the show being a hit and running for a while."

Assuming that a show *is* a hit, a Broadway contract stipulates that musicians must play eight performances a week. However, they are allowed to miss half of these shows each quarter—subbing out their gig while still retaining it as their own. It's possible to miss even more, if you count paid vacation time, sick days, and approved leaves.

"You only get one shot, so you've got to have everything together."

This kind of flexibility is one of the reasons that Larry Lelli loves show drumming. "It leaves the door open for us to do other things," he says. "That way, the rest of the world doesn't forget who we are, and we don't get stale."

Of course, leaves must be granted by the conductor, the in-house contractor, and the union. And requests can be refused, for all sorts of reasons. Says Clint DeGanon, "Maybe you're gone too much. Maybe they don't really like you in the first place. If you take off without approval, you *are* considered absent, and you can drop below the required 50% attendance. You can lose your gig that way."

The Subject Of Subs

"If you *are* going to be gone," says Billy Miller, "You have to get great subs to cover for you. Sometimes the seat will go to one long-term sub. But most show drummers have two or three people they can call."

"It keeps the work moving around," adds Larry Lelli. "Without subbing, drummers who are new on the scene wouldn't have an opportunity to break in.

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There are never open-call auditions for shows. So if you're new, you sub."

Clint DeGanon outlines the standard procedure: "When I first came to New York, I played in quite a few off-Broadway and even off-off-Broadway shows. I didn't make much money—in fact, at first I didn't make *any* money. But that wasn't the object. I just wanted to prove that I could hang."

After paying one's dues off-Broadway, the next step is to sub *on* Broadway. "If you're new in town and want to sub, you start by calling guys who are already playing the shows," explains Warren Odze. "They most likely won't need new subs, because there are eighty zillion other guys in line. Still, things are constantly evolving. Maybe the guy who was really busy as your sub is no longer available. One thing I've seen is that good, ambitious guys with integrity somehow rise to the top. But when you finally *do* get called, you'd better be ready to step up to the plate."

"Personality is also very important," puts in Larry Lelli. "You only get one shot, so you've got to have everything together."

"All of us only call people that we already know are good drummers,"

who were hired, and we're the guys who can be fired if the show suffers because of our poor judgement of a sub."

"Show drumming is like nothing else I've ever done in my life."

says Clint DeGanon. "And even *then* we have to think, 'Can he hang in this environment with this style of music? Is he reliable? Can he be conducted?' These are important questions, because we're putting our jobs on the line. We're the guys

Although reading skills are advantageous when it comes to being a Broadway sub, it isn't always necessary to be an ace reader. "You take the part home and learn it," says Billy Miller. "You can usually have as much

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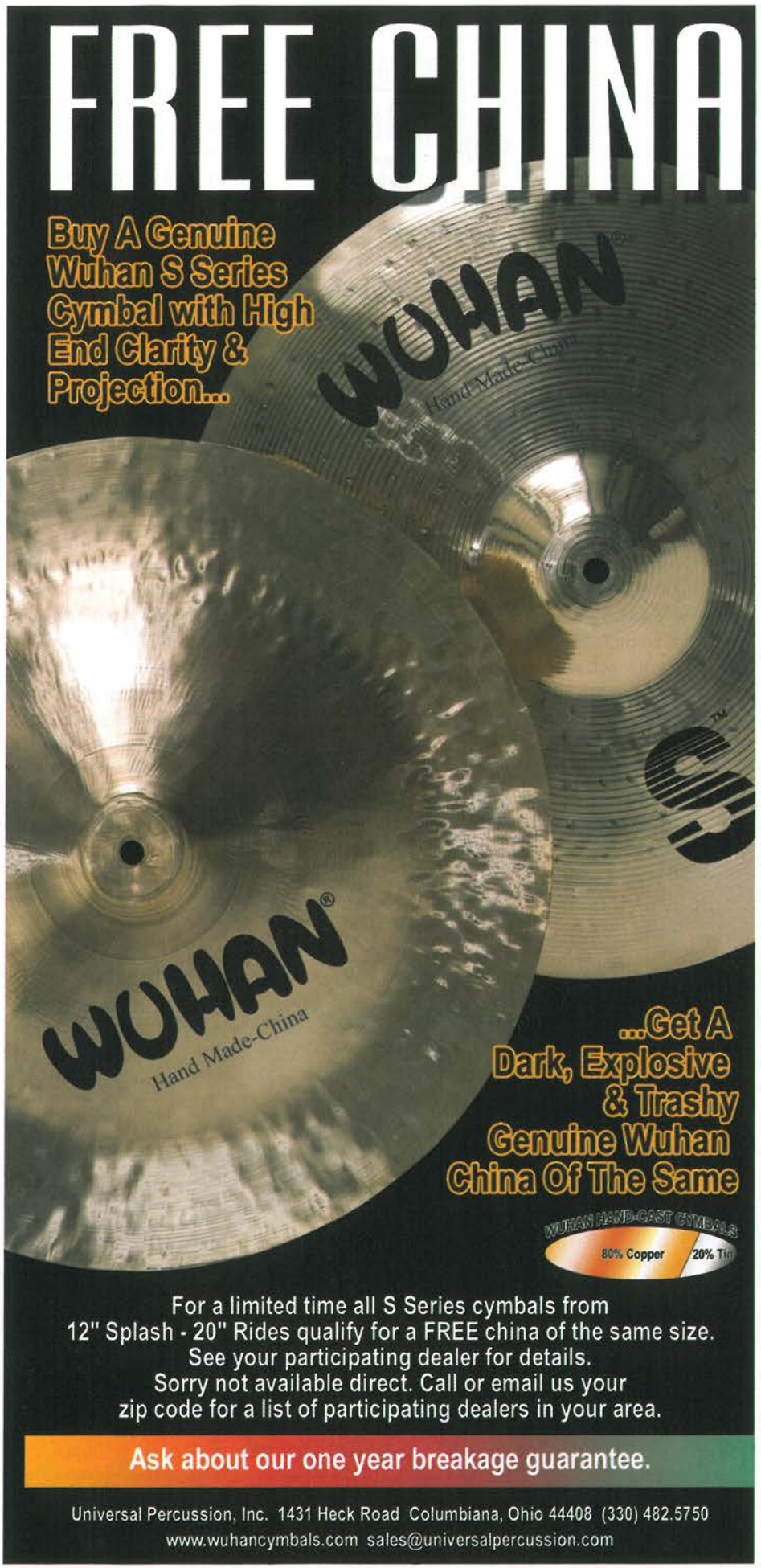


Broadway Beat

time as you need. You get a recording to study, and you can also sit in the pit and watch the conductor as many times as you wish." Miller himself provides subs with a videotape of the conductor leading the orchestra.

Dealing with the musical nuances of a score involves more than just reading a chart. "The drum chair is the hardest position in the pit," says Clint DeGanon. "A trumpet player can take most parts home, look at a few passages, and play the show the next day. A drummer has to prepare bar by bar, for at least a month on average."

"You should know the show so well that you're not reading notes—just bars and breaks," adds John Meyers. "If you haven't learned the rhythms, you're in trouble."

Preparing to sub a show does *not* involve developing a personal approach to the drum part. "When you're a sub, interpretation is not the thing," says Billy Miller. "You're supposed to be playing it the way the regular drummer plays it." Warren Odze concurs, adding, "I once subbed for a guy and had to spend two weeks transcribing his part from a tape, because the written music had nothing to do with what he actually played."

Creating The Original Drum Part

While a sub's job is to imitate the performance of the regular drummer, *that* drummer has more room to interpret the music—especially if he or she is with a production from the beginning. Sometimes, a drummer is asked to compose his or her own part for an original show. The player may notate it during choreography rehearsals, or be tape-recorded by an orchestrator who later writes the part, or both.

"There are specific notes for every other instrument," says Billy Miller, "but there is no definitive way to write a drum part. Most orchestrators aren't drummers, so drum parts often come underwritten, without a lot of information, leaving them totally open to interpretation."

Warren Odze gives an example, saying, "The sheet music for *Millie* is 'loose.' A lot of times, if I played exactly what the orchestrator wrote, it would be a mess. For instance, he wrote a jazz ride cymbal

pattern—but on the snare. So I play something different. The creative team also gave me recordings from the period so that my playing would be stylistically accurate."

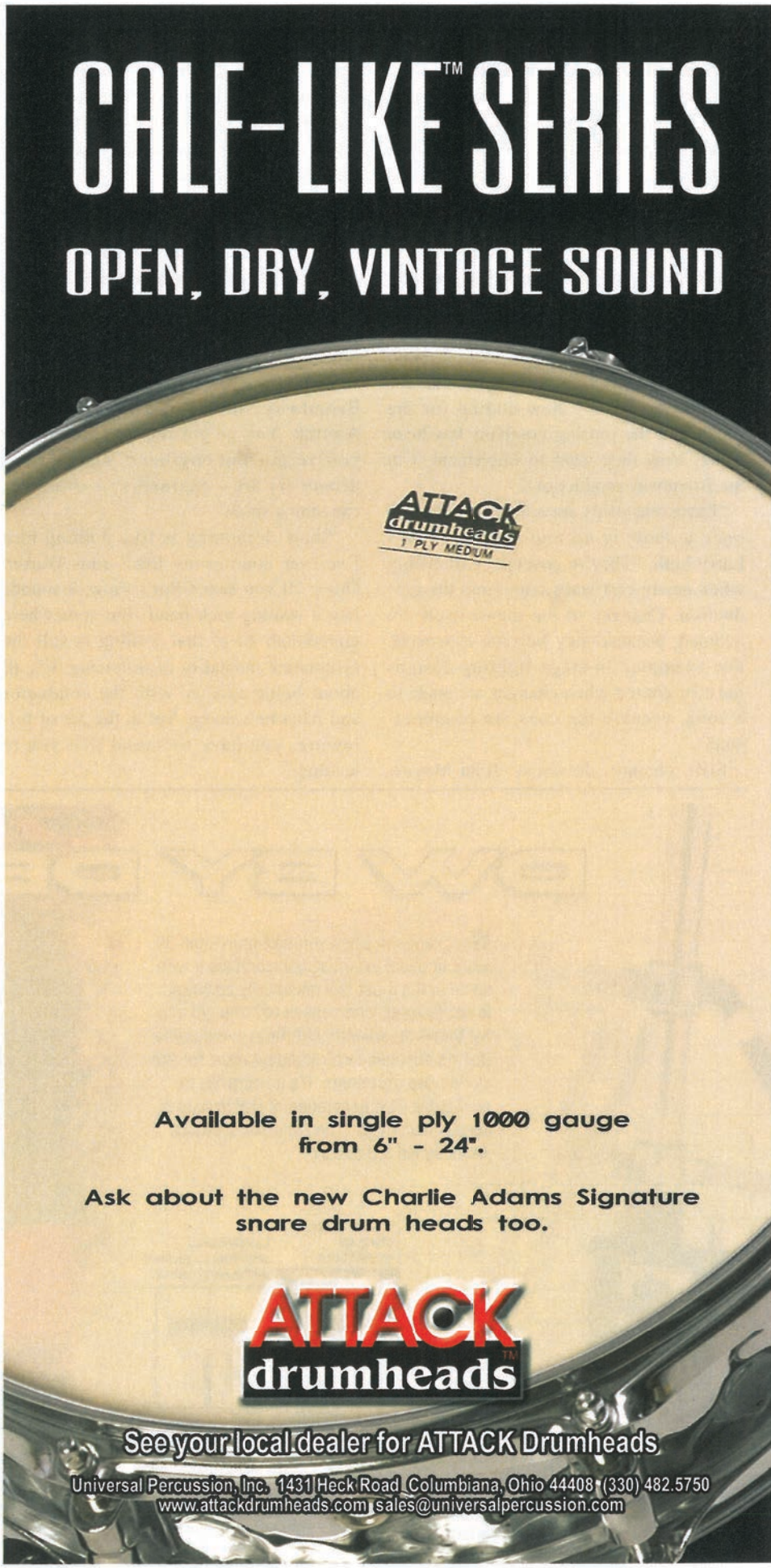
On the other hand, some written parts contain too *much* information. "I did a show called *The Life*," recalls Odze. "If you had programmed orchestrator Harold Wheeler's written part into a drum machine, a lot of it would have sounded like a burning Harvey Mason moment. I said to him, 'Man, you went crazy with this. You were so specific. Why did you do that?' He told me that if a musical is successful, it might still be performed a hundred years from now, and the musicians should know *exactly* how everything should be played."

Some drum parts today even contain electronic samples, and include indications for pad changes. Gary Seligson composed his part for *Aida* when the show was still in pre-production. The orchestrator worked closely with him to accurately document what he was playing. "When we were finally up and running," says Gary, "I looked at the music. I knew that if a sub came in, I'd have to spend ten hours explaining what I played and how I made the electronic patch changes."

Warren Odze adds, "One important thing to remember is that even though you're always a sideman, you're more than 'just a drummer.' You're the arranger. You're shaping the thing. We drummers see how it all comes together. We know a lot more than people give us credit for."

"Knowing" also has to do with being able to judge good and bad. After all, nothing is ever sure on Broadway. Warren remembers his premonitions of failure while in rehearsal for *Seussical, The Musical*. "It was supposed to be the next *Cats*," he says, "but it tanked a short time after opening. One thing I've learned is that you know what you know. A show might have a legendary creative team, but you know if it sounds terrible."

Odze became frustrated in rehearsal because he couldn't follow *Seussical*'s plot. "I thought, 'Maybe it's because I'm not paying attention.' I had no idea what the show was about. And then the world found out that *no one* had any idea."



Broadway Beat

Polishing The Show

Once parts are written, the cast and orchestra enter the arduous final weeks of rehearsal prior to the show's opening. Stress is high, and changes come thick and fast. Musical numbers are inserted or cut. Dance segments are re-structured. Tempos are revised. Everything remains fluid until some point just before opening, at which time the show is "frozen."

"But they can even change that," says Clint DeGanon, with some exasperation. "I have a rehearsal next week, because the composers wrote a new ending for the finale that the touring company has been using. Now they want to implement it in the Broadway production."

"Extra rehearsals are actually pretty rare once a show is up and running," says Larry Lelli. "They're generally called only when newly cast leads come into the production. Changes to the music itself are avoided, because they become expensive. For example, on-stage lighting designs must be altered when changes are made to a song, because the cues are computerized."

Still, changes do occur. John Meyers played *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, a show that underwent two major overhauls in mid-run. "For two weeks," he says, "the cast rehearsed the numbers a new way during the day and performed them the old way at night. I don't know how they did it."

Coping With The Conductor

Clint DeGanon credits *Hairspray* musical director Lon Hoyt with one of his favorite analogies: "According to Lon," says Clint, "being a drummer on a Broadway show is like working for Amtrak: You've got the conductor, and you've got the engineer. That's what drummers are—engineers. A drummer can stop a show."

"Show drumming is like nothing else I've ever done in my life," adds Warren Odze. "If you hear Clint's show, it sounds like a wailing rock band. But somewhere underneath all of that wailing is still the symphonic mentality of *following*. It's all about being exactly with the conductor and what he's doing. Yet in the act of following, you have to sound like you're leading."

The importance of following a conductor goes beyond the purely musical aspects. In most Broadway situations, the conductor is connected to all of the artistic and technical elements. "Conductors see the stage, hear the mix from the stage, and hear the band," Clint DeGanon explains. "They're also responsible for musical cues that stage managers will take to control mechanical shifts of props and scenery, which can kill people if mistakes are made. So in some cases following the conductor becomes a safety issue."

"Being conducted is a skill you have to develop," adds Billy Miller. "You can do that by going to pits and trying to understand what the conductor is doing. Community theater is a good starting point, although many of those productions are led by pianists. You really need experience with someone up there with a baton.

"Orchestral experience is important for other reasons," Billy continues. "Pit drummers must sometimes phrase with other instruments. It's about being a musician, not just a drummer. The drum

is not just rhythmic; it's part of the orchestra."

"Conductors tend to fall into two camps," observes Gary Seligson. "Most that I've worked with understand that the rhythm section should be allowed to 'take it' until a passage comes that *needs* to be conducted. Still, there were conductors at *Aida* who insisted that every quarter note land right where it was conducted. I had to be aware of that, because if I went in thinking, 'He's going to give control to me, and I'm going to take it from there'—forget it. I'd be canned."

To reduce disagreements about tempos in *Hairspray*, Clint DeGanon suggested using a click track. It's now used on eighty percent of the show. "It's a relatively revolutionary idea for Broadway," says Clint. "As a result, some shows on which the use of a click would be possible still don't use it. They're afraid it will make things 'too rigid.'"

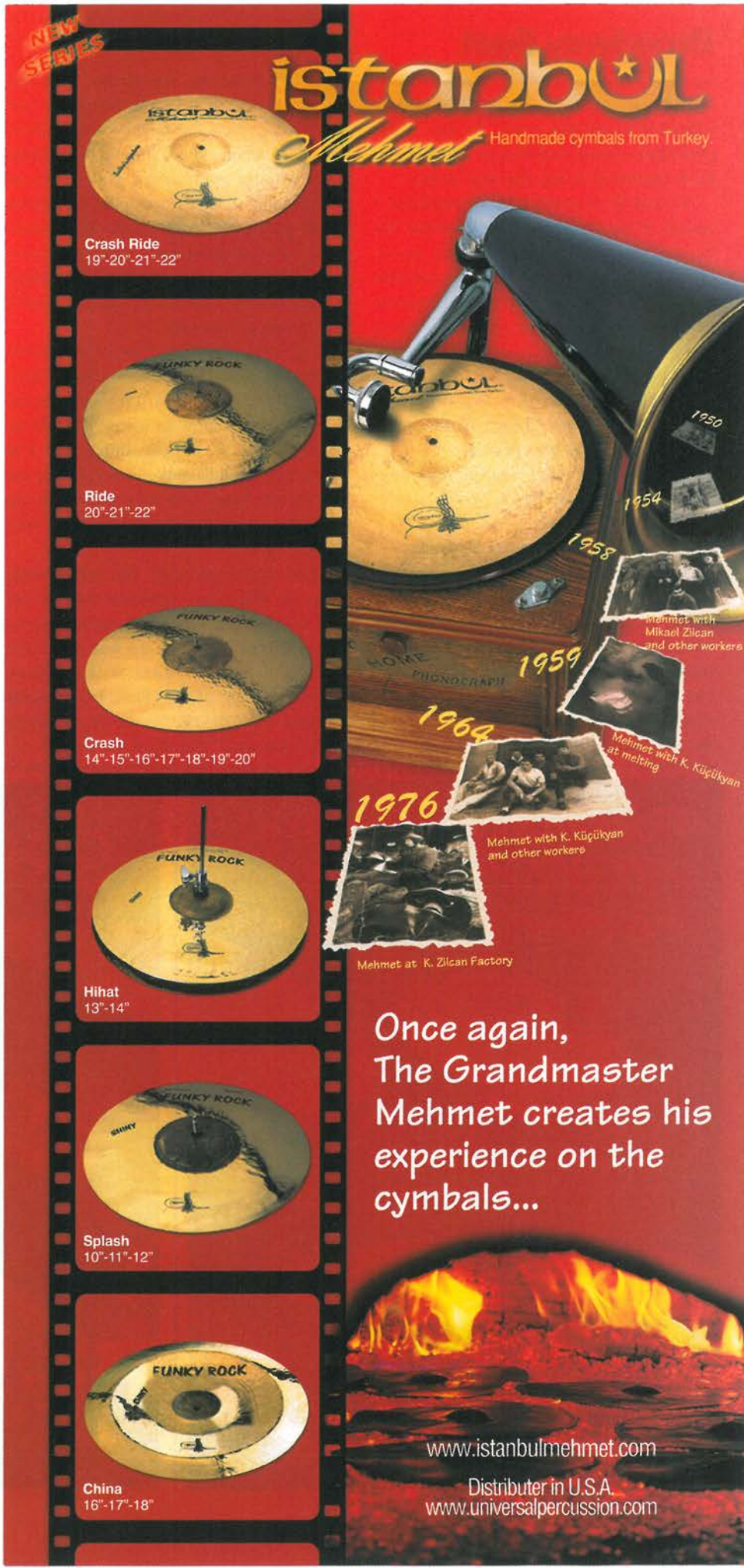
On the other hand, certain shows use click tracks to coordinate various elements. For example, *The Producers* uses a click on some numbers to keep the band locked in with pre-recorded vocal tracks. But what if the tempo of a song needs to be changed for a single performance? Suppose a performer has an injury and needs a dance number to be slower?

"Each show has its own procedure," responds Gary Seligson. "In some cases the conductor might be okay with changing a tempo to accomodate a performer. But in most cases they'll simply put on the understudy and keep the show as it is."

Warren Odze says he sometimes must fight to maintain tempo on *Millie*. "A lot of times I feel like I'm way ahead of everybody," he says. "There may be subs who drag, or even regular musicians who 'space out' and aren't in sync with the rhythm section. Conductors seem to use the drummer as the great quantizer. They think, 'If I can at least get the drums in the grid, these other guys will come around.'"

With The Show, Or Against It

One element of playing Broadway that cannot be forgotten is that there are performers on stage focusing on what *they're* doing, not on what is happening in the pit. This can pose a challenge to the musicians. In fact, Warren Odze often finds it



necessary to completely ignore what he is hearing on stage. "It sounds like people talking in a crowded room," he says. "The performers know that they're supposed to be in rhythm with me, but they're not."

"It can be a complete distraction," agrees Clint DeGanon. He controls his headphone sound with a small mixer board. "There's no level lower in my mix than the show vocals. They're not concert performers; they're people who dance, sing, and act. And they probably do one thing better than the other."

"I take the vocals down in my mix," agrees John Meyers. "I only want to hear the pianist and the bass player."

"I don't even wear headphones anymore," says Larry Lelli.

Keeping Things Fresh

On Broadway, as in any show situation, an unresponsive house can bring the actors *and* the musicians down. But even with enthusiastic, packed houses, staying fresh and positive for eight shows a week can be difficult. At the time of this interview, John Meyers had been on *Cabaret* for over three and a half years.

"It can get boring," he admits. "You can be up there just going through the motions. I enjoy the music of that show, which is a big plus. Even so, your mind does wander sometimes. But if you're professional, it doesn't wander enough to cause problems." John chalks the consistency of his playing up to years of experience. "I do this because I still enjoy playing the drums. I can do a good job even if I'm not all psyched up for it."

"I'm really fortunate," says Larry Lelli. "I seem to have the temperament for this. I love playing drums so much that at the two hundredth show in a row I'll still be really up for it, feeling lucky that I'm there. I get paid to make music, excite the rest of the band, and help present a big show for those two thousand people who came to see it."

Clint DeGanon says that what helps keep his *Hairspray* situation fresh is the fact that he has legendary guitarist/producer David Spinozza on one side, and Aretha Franklin bassist Francisco Centeno on the other. "Plus, I don't have to play exactly the same thing every night," he says. "The show evolves."

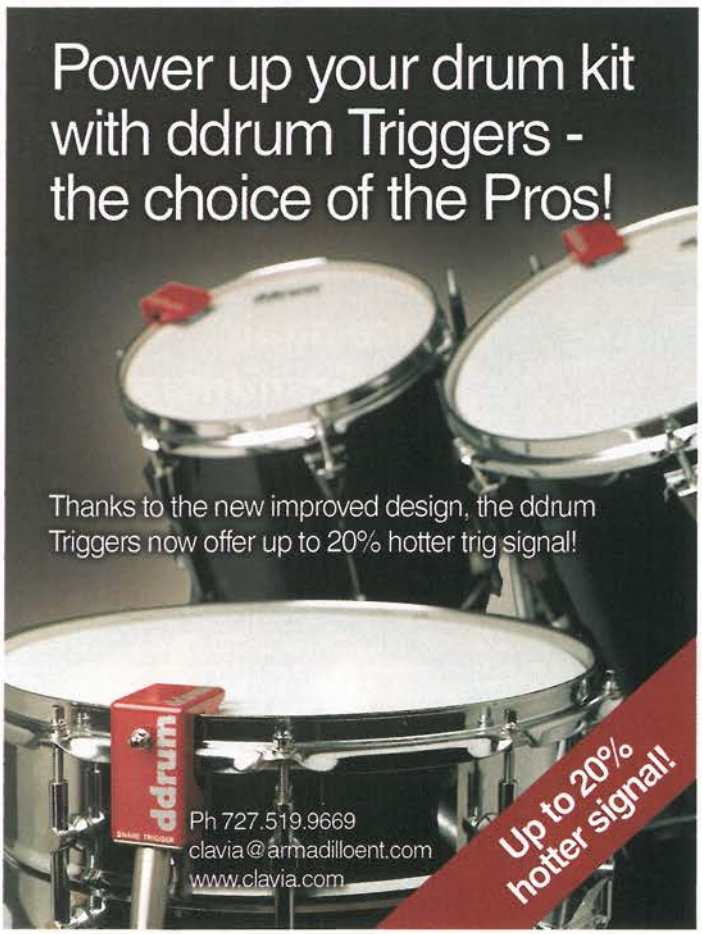
Not every drummer on our panel enjoys that musical flexibility. Billy Miller says, "What I play in *Nine* is very specific. If I do something that's different, I'll get a look from the conductor that says, 'What just happened? Why did you do it? Please don't do it again.' The way I get through it is to keep trying to perfect what I'm doing. You never get there, but you're always taking that half-step towards it."

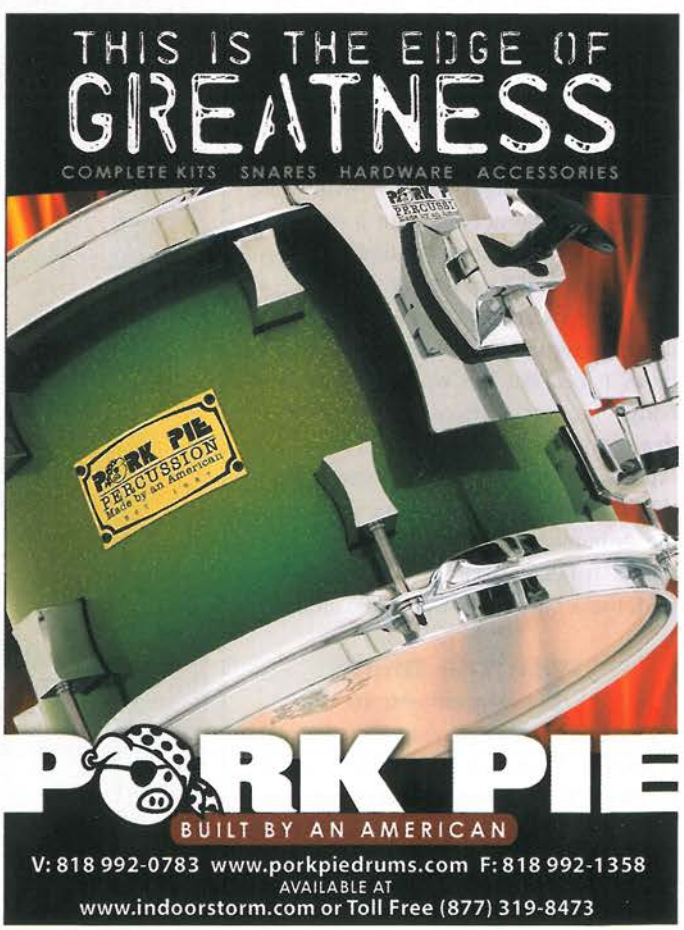
Getting Into The Scene

When asked how Broadway has evolved in recent years, and what advice they'd give to up-and-coming players, our panel became especially animated.

"The bar's been raised tremendously for all musicians," says Clint DeGanon. "The caliber of players in the pits is top-level, because other areas of the music business have died or are difficult. So now the standards are higher than ever before."

"It's as serious as any studio or live gig," agrees Warren Odze. "When I first started, playing shows was next to playing weddings. It was records, jingles, demos, Broadway, and weddings. Now





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Mike Cosgrove (Alien Ant Farm),
Scott Underwood (Train),
Adam Deitch (John Scofield),
Keith Carlock (Sting),
Mike Marsh (Dashboard Confessional),
Steve Jocz (Sum 41),
Steven Drozd (Flaming Lips),
Shannon Larkin (Godsmack),
Travis Barker (Blink-182),
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Broadway Beat

there's no more caste system, which is actually healthier for music."

"The competition is fierce," adds Lelli. "Broadway has the best players—and the most pressure. It's the game in town right now."

How would an aspiring drummer get into that game? "For someone who has just graduated college," says Billy Miller, "the goal should not be getting into a Broadway show. It should be to learn how to play—how to be a great musician. Broadway is not where you learn how to play. It's where you refine your skills."

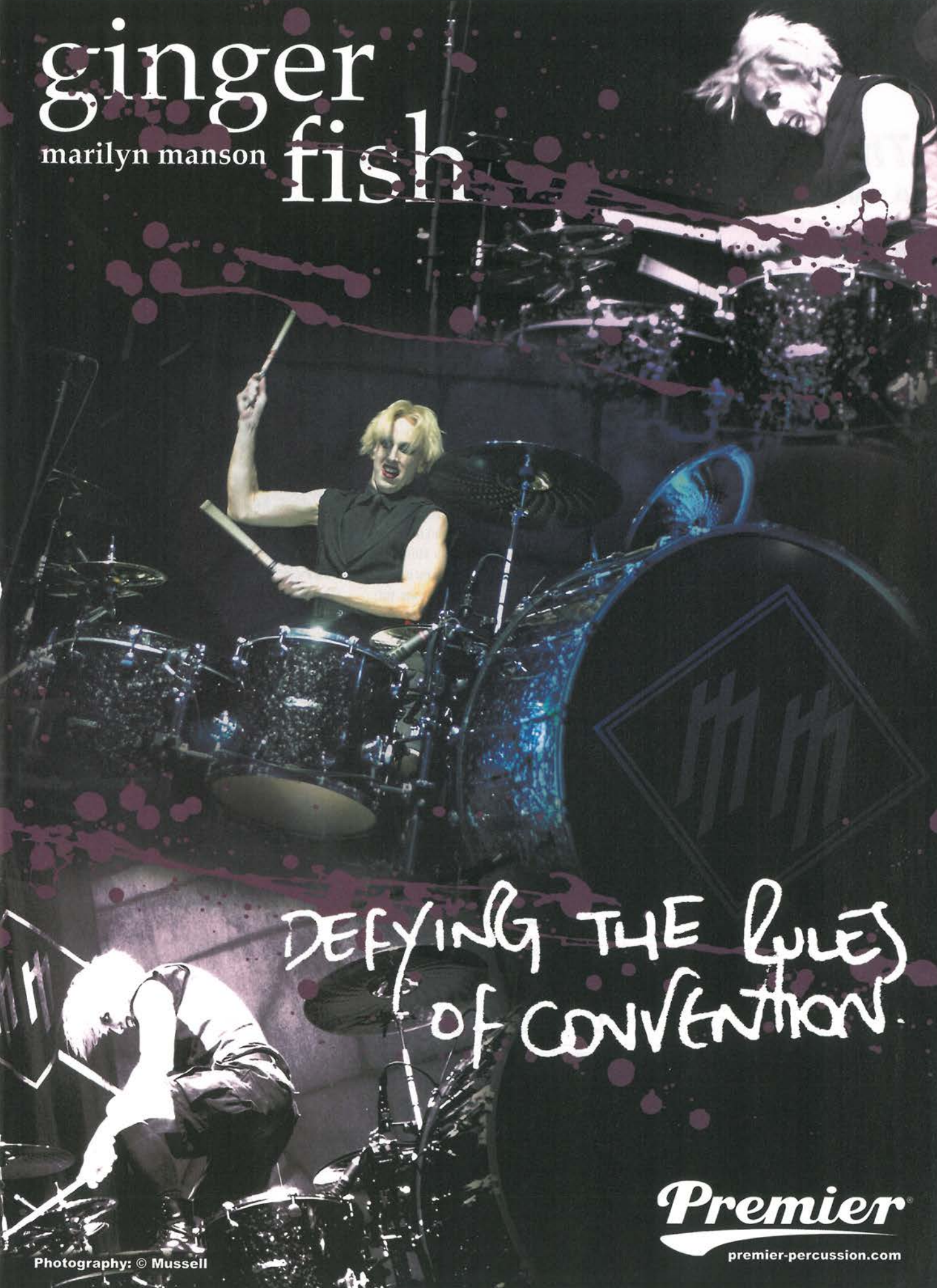
According to Billy, the drum book for the revival of *Nine* was distilled from the original production's separate drumset and percussion scores. "I think combined drum/percussion books will become more common as producers look for new ways to save money," he says. "Because of that, it's a good idea to study percussion on top of drumset. It will increase your options."

The drummers on our panel agree that today's Broadway playing requires more than a traditional "musical theater" approach. "What we all bring to our Broadway chairs is experience *outside* Broadway," says Clint DeGanon. "The only way to train for this is to do a million gigs and develop your own musical point of view. When you're twenty years old, you don't have one yet."

"I feel like I've been chosen to play the shows I've done because I played their styles authentically," adds Warren Odze. "It's really important for young guys not to start playing shows too early. First, go out there and let Wilson Pickett throw you off his bus, or tour with The Woody Herman Revival Band.

"Ronnie Zito [drummer on Broadway's *Chicago*] is a great player," Warren continues. "When I hear him on TV playing the dopiest two-beat thing, he still sounds like a blues man. Somewhere in there, I hear a guy who played with Woody Herman.

"When you hear John Robinson lay down a groove," Warren concludes, "it's not just that he's great with the click. You're hearing a cat who was burning it up with Chaka Kahn for years in clubs. That experience shines through. So if you come to Broadway, you should come with that kind of experience in your pocket. After all, you can't have enough music on your side, no matter *what* you do."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The Speed Rating Chart

A Way To Measure Your Chops

by Peter Magadini

The Speed Rating Chart allows drummers to track their hand-to-hand stick speed while developing a more proficient and faster single-stroke roll. (To me, it's the most fundamental and important rudiment of them all.)

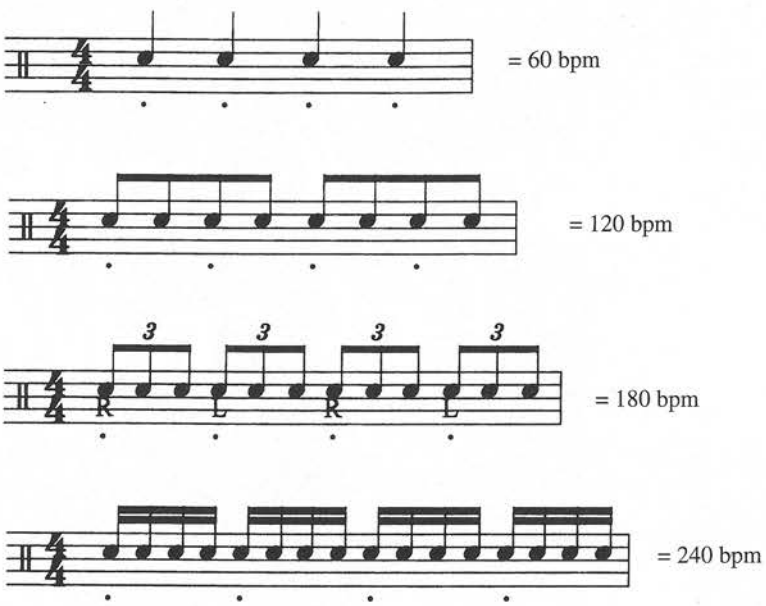
The following rhythms are graduated and increase in speed with each consecutive rhythmic line. The speed is rated in terms of how many beats you can play in sixty seconds. Therefore, the first line logically begins with quarter notes. Each quarter note corresponds with one click of a metronome set at 60 bpm (beats per minute). At this slow setting, your speed rating would therefore be measured as a "60" (notes in sixty seconds). After that the following speed of each new rhythmic line increases dramatically.

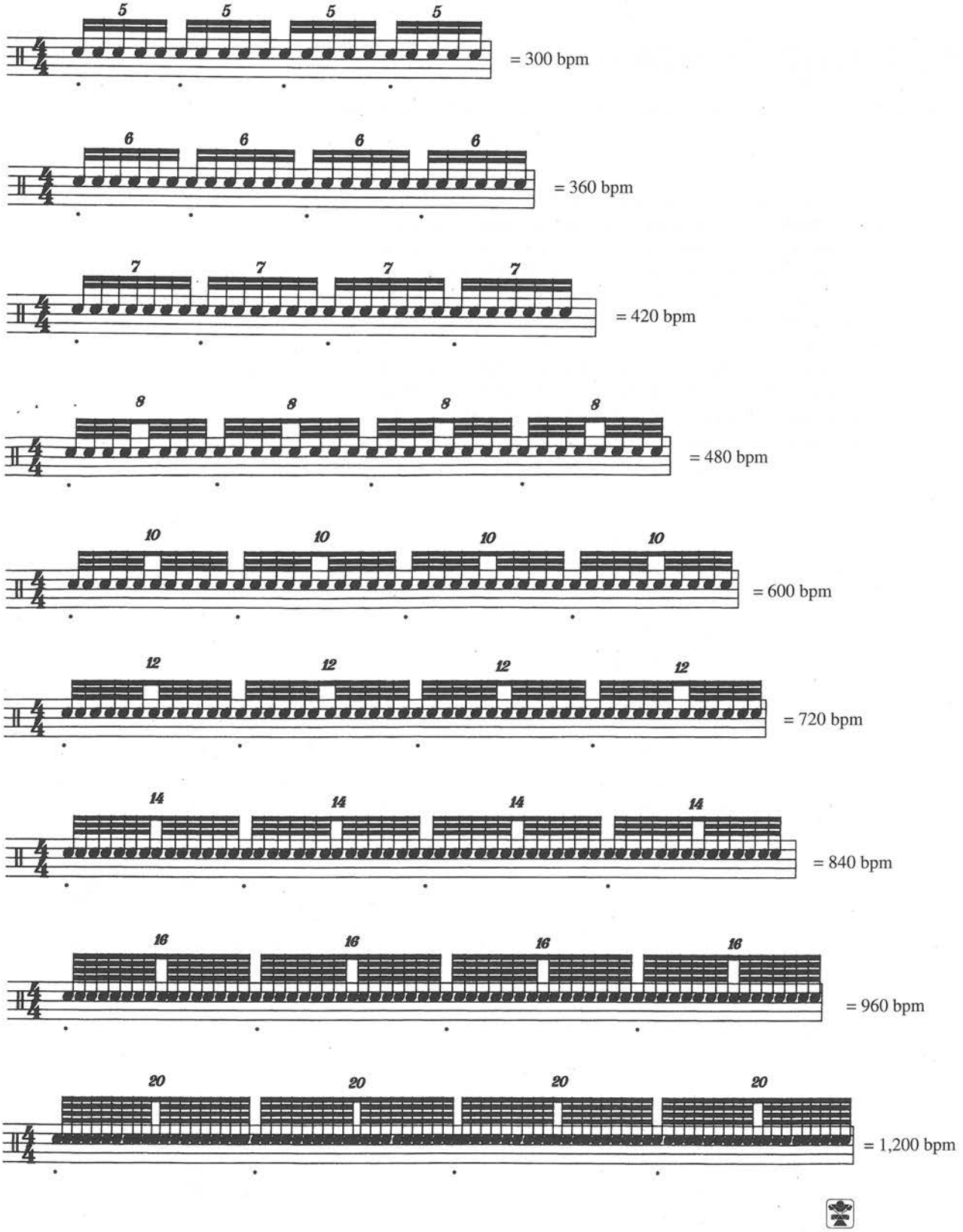
You'll find that continuously playing a single-stroke roll for sixty seconds while focusing on a specific rhythmic system can be very challenging. Sixty seconds can seem like a *long* time.

Use the Speed Rating Chart as a learning tool to improve your single-stroke-roll speed while increasing your own "personal best" speed rating to new levels.

What's Your Speed Rating?

To check your speed rating, set your metronome to 60 bpm. Then find the fastest hand-to-hand, single-stroke, rhythmic subdivision in the following list that you can maintain for one entire minute (sixty ticks of a metronome set at 60). This is your (current) speed rating. (By the way, this chart may also be used to gauge your double bass drum speed.) By practicing this on a daily basis, you'll see your speed quickly and significantly increase. Good luck.




5 5 5 5
= 300 bpm
6 6 6 6
= 360 bpm
7 7 7 7
= 420 bpm
8 8 8 8
= 480 bpm
10 10 10 10
= 600 bpm
12 12 12 12
= 720 bpm
14 14 14 14
= 840 bpm
16 16 16 16
= 960 bpm
20 20 20 20
= 1,200 bpm

Reading Basics

Part 2: More Note And Rest Values

by Kelly Paletta

Last month we learned about the underlying rhythmic framework of most pop songs—the 16th-note subdivision. We also learned that 8th notes are related to 16th notes in that they are half as fast. We also learned that in the imperfect system of translating music to the printed page, 16th notes are written as a filled note head with a stem with two flags attached to it. To indicate 8th notes, we simply remove one of the flags. An 8th note is a filled note head with a stem with just one flag attached to it.

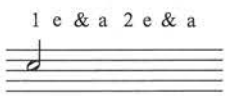
Along the way we learned how to relate all of this to the 1e&a song. (Remember "1e&a 2e&a 3e&a 4e&a"?) In short, 16th notes occupy the space of one syllable in the 1e&a song. Eighth notes occupy the space of two syllables in the 1e&a song. This month we'll discuss quarter notes, half notes, whole notes, and rests.

Suppose that we want to play half as fast as the 8th notes. How do we notate that? You guessed it! Take away a flag. The resulting note value is called a quarter note. There are four quarter notes in a measure of 4/4, or "common time." Each quarter note occupies the space of four syllables in the 1e&a song. Quarter notes are written as a filled (solid black) note head with a stem and no flags.

In standard musical notation, here are four quarter notes along with the 1e&a song.

Remember the drum fill that Ringo played just before the chorus on "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds"? Those are quarter notes. Practice playing quarter notes while singing the 1e&a song. Easy, huh?

Now here comes a puzzler. Suppose you want to play a note that occupies eight syllables in the 1e&a song (half as fast as quarter notes). So far we've removed flags to indicate a slower rate, but now there are no flags left to remove! How do you notate this? Now the system changes. Instead of removing flags, the convention is to use a hollow note head to indicate a half note. A half note is a hollow note head with a stem with no flags. It occupies the space of eight syllables in the 1e&a song.



Similarly, a whole note, which sustains through all sixteen syllables in the 1e&a song, is a hollow note head with no stem.

Here we have the table of time for all note values that we've encountered so far—16th, 8th, quarter, half, and whole notes.

You Play A Little, You Rest A Little

Famous drummers like Peter Erskine, Billy Ward, and others are fond of saying that it's the space *between* the notes that is most important. In this section we'll look at how to notate silence. Brief moments of silence in music are called rests.

Notation of rests follows a similar convention as notes—16th-note rests, like 16th notes, have two flags; 8th-note rests, like 8th notes, have one flag. A quarter-note rest is a funny squiggly line with no flags. A half-note rest is a filled box that sits on top of the line. A whole-note rest is a filled box that hangs down from the line. Here are examples of rests.

Rest:	Rest Value:	Flags:	Occupies this many syllables in the 1e&a song:
	16th note	2	1
	8th note	1	2
	quarter note	0	4
	half note	0	8
	whole note	0	16

Relativity

It's important to realize that note values are indicators of *relative* speed and duration. That is, 8th notes are articulated at half the speed (they have twice the duration) of 16ths. Quarter notes are half the speed of 8ths, but these speeds have no relationship to the clock, only to each other. Tempo indications are how we reconcile note values to the clock. Tempo is usually specified in terms of beats per minute (bpm), in the following format:

This little equation means that quarter notes are played at a rate of 120 bpm (two per second) and every subdivision is played relative to that. As you can imagine, quarter notes at a very fast tempo—say, 290 bpm on a bebop tune—actually go by at a faster rate than 8th notes on a pop ballad. So when your friends ask if you can play 32nd notes on double bass drums, you can honestly answer, "Of course!" You know that note values only indicate relative speed and 32nd notes aren't all that fast at quarter note = four beats per minute.

I'm working on lyrics for my rock 'n' roll anthem, but so far all I have is, "One... Two... One, Two, Three, Four!"

—some guitarist that nobody ever heard of

Let's Play (And Read!)

Now we are familiar with 16th notes, 8th notes, quarter notes, half notes, whole notes, and equivalent rests. We know how to reconcile all of these subdivisions to the clock. This lesson ends with a little snare drum piece that puts everything into practice.

Before tackling the piece, let's take a look at the more challenging phrases found in it. Some of the figures might look confusing at first. The trick to deciphering the notation is to write the 1e&a song over every measure. Every syllable must be accounted for in either a note or a rest. Sing the 1e&a song while you play. Here are a couple of the trickier measures aligned with the 1e&a song.

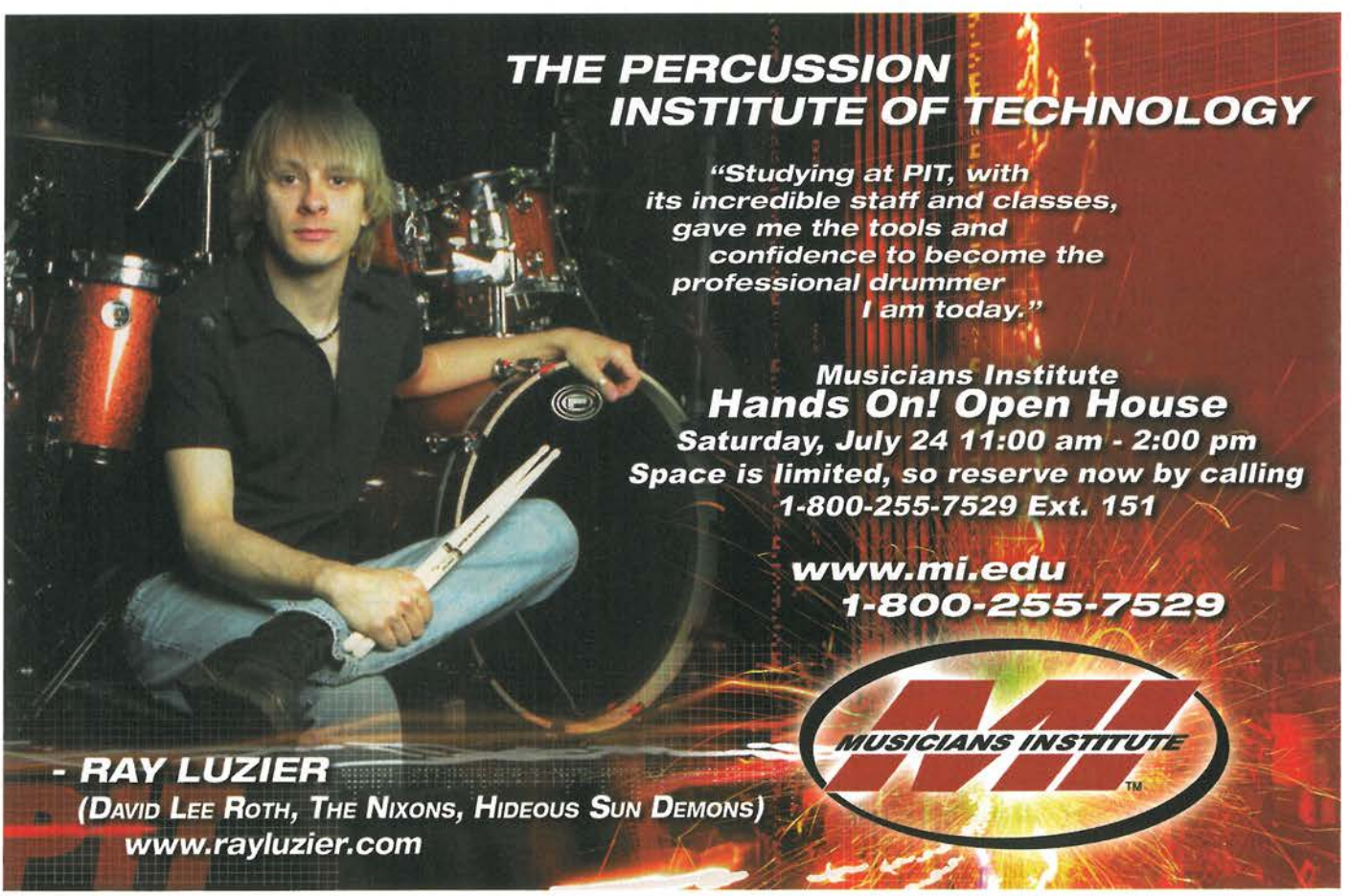
Measure 2, 8th-note rest on beat 3:

Measure 14, 16th-note rest on beat 3:

Write the 1e&a song over every measure of the piece on the next page, and sing along while you play. Once you're comfortable counting and reading the rhythms, try orchestrating them around the drumset. Have fun with it.

Basics

Next month we'll tackle 8th-note and 16th-note combinations. See you then.



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Zildjian

Zutty Singleton
"About Face"

by Michael Dawson

Zutty Singleton was highly influential in the development of the Chicago style of drumming in the 1930s. He expanded the ideas of Baby Dodds and other New Orleans drummers to create a smoother and more melodic approach to the drumset.

On the 1941 recording of "About Face" (from the album *Pee Wee Russell Jazz Original*, Commodore CMD-404), Singleton plays an introduction and solo that displays many characteristics of his highly influential drumming style. He effectively blends a traditional military influence with a series of accented buzz rolls, melodic phrasing, and interesting polyrhythmic figures.

The introduction displays the traditional military influence common among the early jazz drummers of New Orleans. The most significant difference, however, is in Zutty's use of the bass drum. In most early jazz recordings, the bass drum divided each measure into half notes. But here Singleton creates a smoother sound by playing four even quarter notes. This subtle difference helped define the Chicago style of drumming. Also, notice the use of the triplets in measures 9 through 12. These figures are highly technical and seldom occurred in the playing of other early jazz drummers.

The solo begins with a seamless buzz roll underlined by a steady bass drum ostinato. Notice the various accent types interspersed within the roll in measures 17 through 36. Singleton contrasts subtle accents in measures 19 and 27 with full accents in measures 23, 25, 29, 30, and 32. He also uses loud rimshot accents in measures 33 through 36. These different accent types create interesting phrases within the context of an extended buzz roll.

Singleton then progresses into a series of melodic phrases. He momentarily breaks the bass drum ostinato by incorporating the drum into an interesting figure in measure 41. Here the bass drum acts as an extra melodic voice that contributes to the musical phrase. This practice would become a key component in the drumming style of Zutty's successor, Gene Krupa. The four-measure phrase in measures 41 through 44 culminates with a unique three-note pattern between two toms. The next phrase is similarly structured, also ending with a three-note pattern in measure 48. By ending each four-measure phrase with the same idea, Singleton creates a cohesion and logic to his solo that's very effective.

The accented buzz rolls return in measures 49 and 50 and are followed by a distinctive polyrhythmic figure in measures 51 and 52. This syncopated figure creates a polyrhythm of three-against-two between the bass drum and the upper components of the kit. It's also unique that Singleton delays the polyrhythm until the second beat of measure 51. Similar ideas occur in measures 58 through 61, 63, and 64.

Beginning on beat 4 of measure 58, Zutty plays the 3:2 polyrhythm between two toms and the bass drum. This figure sounds very complex because of placement of the figure on the fourth beat of the measure. The solo then concludes with another 3:2 polyrhythm in measures 63 and 64, this time with the bass and snare drum in unison against the cowbell.

MUSIC KEY
China
R.C.
T.T.
S.D.
F.T.
B.D.
Ghost Note
Cowbell
wood-block
♩= 124
INTRO
9
SOLO
17
25
33
41
49
57

Drumkit Change-Ups

Keeping Things Fresh

by Michael Cartellone

We're all human. It's not uncommon for our concentration to wander during a show—especially on a long tour when we're playing the same songs every night. You know the drill: You're halfway through a tune, when all of a sudden you find yourself thinking about an episode of *Gilligan's Island*. This actually happened to me once. If it's happened to you, take comfort in the fact that you're not alone.

It's not hard to understand. Night after night you sit behind the same rig, you play the same songs the same way, with the same grooves and the same fills. All that repetition can easily translate into playing in an uninspired or unfocused manner.

Now, I don't suggest that you should change how you play the songs every night. (The band would probably kill you if you did.) It's important to be consistent—while incorporating whatever amount of spontaneity is appropriate for your gig.

Fortunately, there are reasons for the boredom and "sameness" that you *can* address. And one of those that you might not have thought of is the configuration of your kit.

Getting Out Of The Zone

I know how particular drummers can get about their rigs. Believe me, I have a few quirks about mine. (Just ask my drum tech, Rod Gibson.) We drummers spend hours getting every little detail—every height, every angle—just right. We're looking for that comfort zone, where we'll be able to play our best. Once we find it, we become Nigel from *Spinal Tap*: "Don't touch it. Don't even *look* at it." The problem is that a "comfort zone" can rapidly become a "dead zone" into which our enthusiasm and concentration can disappear.

Several years ago I got into the habit of changing my kit configuration every time I started a new tour—and even a few times *during* a tour. Sometimes I'd change it slightly, sometimes I'd go to extremes. (You're probably thinking, "This guy's crazy." Maybe—but that's another column altogether.) I found that changing the kit prevented me from falling into "autopilot" while playing.

A different drum configuration keeps me on my toes. I *have* to be focused; I don't have a choice. Yes, I play the same songs, grooves, and fills, so there is consistency for the band. The difference is, since I'm sitting behind a different kit configuration, those same songs, grooves, and fills become new for *me*. I have to think on my feet, transposing a drum fill as I prevent myself from doing it physically the way I always have.

This approach has helped me immensely, to the point where now I never get bored on a show. To illustrate exactly what has worked for me, I've listed below the different setups I've used on various records and tours that I've done. (I mention cymbals if they are special to the setup.) Give 'em a look, and see if they inspire you to do a little rearranging on your rig.

Damn Yankees

The Damn Yankees records and tours called for a good ol' stadium-rock setup, with double kicks, two toms up front and center, and two floor toms, all finished in a white/blue/gray striped paint job.

But I did break the mold a bit by putting one floor tom to the left of the hi-hat. (The hunting trophies on the wall in the photo are a giveaway that the shot was taken in Ted Nugent's rehearsal room.)

Accept

When I went into the studio with German heavy metal band Accept, I took a *huge* kit: four toms up front, and three floors, including one to the left of the hi-hat. But I went to a single kick with a double pedal.

When I toured with Accept following the release of this recording, I really got bold. Just to see if I could pull it off, I went out with a single kick (with the double pedal), a snare, and one floor tom. I filled in the holes of the setup with several effect cymbals, as well as a normal ride and a few crashes.

My thinking was that I should be able to make this kit sound the same as the big one, within the context of the music. It worked. I had so much fun on this kit that I used it immediately afterward on a tour with my old Damn Yankees cohort, Ted Nugent. I don't think Ted ever noticed that there weren't any rack toms. (Don't tell him, though. He's armed, you know.)

John Fogerty

John's tour took me back to a traditional setup. I'm afraid I don't have a photo of this kit, but it's pretty easy to visualize. I used two rack toms, which were mounted on a double tom stand to the left of the single kick. I used only one floor tom, and I played the kick with a single pedal. This setup really reflected the nature of John's songs. That's an important thing to consider when you're thinking about your kit configuration.

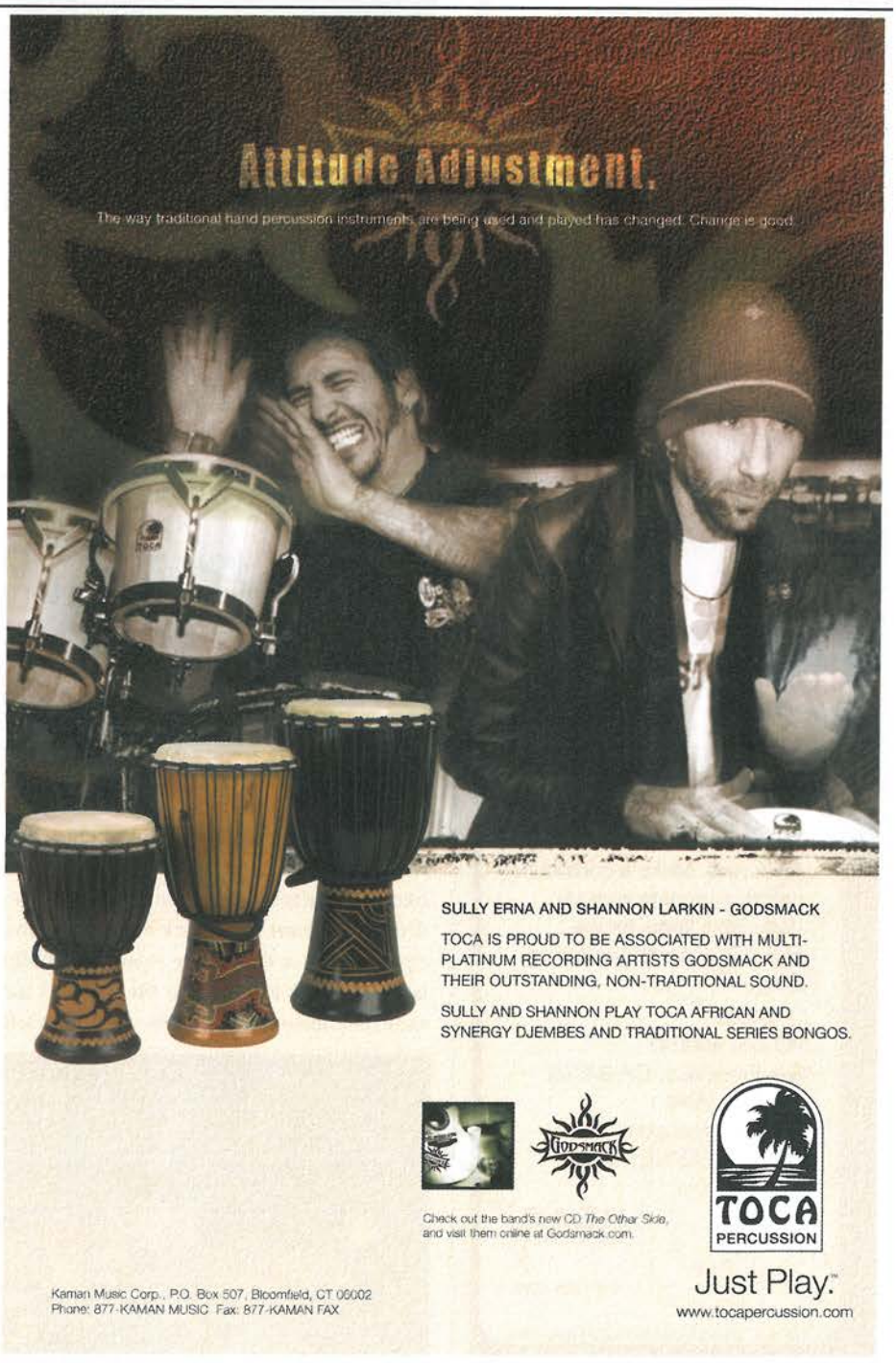

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Photo by Chauky Davis

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First Person

Lynyrd Skynyrd

This is my current gig, and over the years it has seen some bizarre behavior when it comes to drumkit change-ups. Here's how the change sequence has run.

First configuration: Three toms up, two down (both floors on my right), single kick with a double pedal.

Second configuration: One tom up, two down (floors split left and right). The rack tom sat directly over the middle of the kick, book-ended by a ride and a China cymbal. Everything was very low and flat on this kit. (My mom and dad dug that kit, too.)

Third configuration: Two kicks, one rack tom, and two floors. This was a lot like the Accept kit, in that there were no drums up front. The rack tom sat to my right, where a first floor would normally be. One floor tom was to the right of the rack tom, the other floor tom was to the left of the hi-hat. I kept the flat, side-by-side ride and China combination out front, and added a remote cable hi-hat on the right.

This was a tough kit to get used to. I woodshedded for three months before pre-tour rehearsals. But it felt great once I got used to it.

Current configuration: The setup I'm using these days is a single kick with a double pedal, one rack tom to the left of the hi-hat, and two floor toms on my right. The only thing out front is the ride cymbal, which is positioned low and flat. The remote cable hat is still on the right. Don't be surprised, however, if by the time you read this column I'm standing behind a cocktail kit!

As you can see, I've made the most of this ever-changing approach. It's really kept things fresh for me. Plus, it's fun to tinker around with all that gear.

I earnestly suggest that you give this idea some thought. You don't have to go to extremes to make it work (although it's more challenging to do so). Maybe just add a tom or a cymbal. Or better yet, take one away. It could be the kind of self-inflicted kick in the pants that we all need every now and then. See ya' out there.

Michael Cartellone came to prominence in 1990 as a member of Damn Yankees. He's featured on their hit single "High Enough." Michael has also recorded and/or toured with Accept, John Fogerty, John Wetton, and Tommy Shaw, and has been the drummer for Southern rock legends Lynyrd Skynyrd since 1997. Check out Michael on the band's new disc, Lynyrd Skynyrd Lyve: The Vicious Cycle Tour.

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Performing In The Moment

by Maureen Brown Gratton

Have you ever played a night where it felt as though you were hovering above yourself, watching yourself drum? Have you ever felt that it wasn't you who was playing, but rather it was someone else performing through you—almost as though you were channeling another musician's talents into your own body? That's what it feels like to be "in the moment"—to have a clear mind that's receptive to whatever is happening at that point in time.

I'm not suggesting that you shouldn't come prepared to any playing situation. I'm only encouraging you to be receptive and reactive to your surroundings. Take the talents that you know you have, and exercise them spontaneously. Be responsive to your fellow musicians and to your audience. Be responsive to the new idea that just came into your head for the first time. Try new things. Be creative and experimental when the gig you're playing allows you to be—and *especially* when working out alone. Challenge yourself and those around you. And of course, by all means have fun.

Some frustrated drummers tell me that they wish they could perform at drum festivals, they wish they had drum endorsements, they wish they got better gigs. My response to that attitude is, Get out there and let people hear you! Introduce yourself to people and get a dialog going. Instead of channeling your energy in a negative way, why not use it to change things and accomplish the goals that you would like to attain. Do something *now*, not tomorrow. If you put it off another day, you might as well put it off another year. It's unbelievable what kind of inspiration and education you can acquire with a little foresight and desire. Take some time to invest in yourself. It's truly worth it.

I surrender myself to the moment without expectations. If I make a mistake, I'll try something else next time. If I find something tasty...great!

If you've been drumming as long as I have, it's likely that you have your technique and your chops down. You've developed your own expertise. We all have different influences that we bring to the kit. Each of us also has our own unique personality. That personality is revealed when we perform. Our personality is also reflected in the way we carry ourselves, just walking into a room. You don't have to say a word. The way you look speaks volumes.

Drum festivals or clinics can be truly inspirational. On the other hand, sometimes seeing someone really hot on stage can make you think to yourself, "That's it. I'm gonna take up the bass." One person actually told me that they quit drumming after seeing their favorite drummer do a clinic. Isn't this a loss for us all?

I've seen internationally acclaimed drummers question their own abilities after witnessing another fine drummer who performed before them. Instead of doing what they knew best and performing what they were comfortable with, they succumbed to trying to compete with someone else. They compromised their own performance. In doing so, they handicapped themselves by not being true to who they are.

I believe that the best way to perform at one's best is to surrender to the moment. Don't try to be someone you're not. Be true to who you are and what you know. Follow your instincts...your intuition...your gut feeling...or whatever you want to call it. I surrender myself to the moment without expectations or criticism. If I make a mistake, I'll learn from it and try something else next time. If I find something tasty...great! I have a new lick.

All of us have something unique to offer. We take all the tricks in our bag, then add some taste, a bit of melody, and a big hunk of who we are as human beings in order to create something special. I hate to see drummers get hung up on their own insecurities—or on someone else's talent—and thus limit their own potential. Each of us should channel our talents into the directions we enjoy. Someone else may be a great Latin player, while your expertise lies in laying down a funk groove. Whatever it is, let's celebrate each other. Let's share ideas, and encourage each other to be the best we can be.

Maureen Brown Gratton is a veteran drummer, singer, bandleader, and clinician. She lives in the Toronto, Ontario, Canada area with her husband, drummer/author/clinician Rick Gratton.

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Leedy By Slingerland

by Harry Cangany

Between 1956 and 1957, the then-powerful Slingerland Drum Company took over the name, patents, and production of venerable Leedy Manufacturing. Production was moved from Leedy's Elkhart, Indiana factory to Slingerland's operation in Chicago. Leedy lugs, mounting brackets, and one of their strainer models were matched with Slingerland shells and hoops. A new gold (and later blue) oval badge was designed for the line. And thus was born the drum line known to collectors as "Leedy Chicago"—but more accurately described as "Leedy by Slingerland."

This Leedy Nite Club kit features an unusual 12x22 bass drum.

This Broadway snare combines Leedy and Slingerland features.

The original Leedy Chicago gold badge was later issued in blue.

This month's featured drumset was called the "Nite Club" model in the last Leedy Elkhart and first Leedy Chicago catalogs. By the second catalog under Slingerland ownership, it was known as the Shelly Manne outfit (with a snare drum change).

The drums feature 3-ply mahogany-poplar-mahogany shells, covered in Slingerland's version of white marine pearl. Slingerland combined their rail consolette, diamond plate brackets, Stick-Saver hoops, and disappearing spurs with Leedy's historic Beavertail lugs, Broadway strainer, extension butt plate, and XL pedal. This blending of two champions created something not quite Leedy and not quite Slingerland.

Slingerland continued to produce the Leedy line into the late 1960s. Their strategy was to use it to take sales away from the newly reconstituted Ludwig Drum Company. The 1955 business event that had sent Leedy to Slingerland had also sent Ludwig to WFL. The purchase of these two brands from Conn appears to be the only instance in history when members of the Slingerland and Ludwig families cooperated on a business venture.

The Nite Club outfit was advertised as having a 14x22 or optional 14x24 bass drum. Our set has a bass drum that's not even cataloged: a 12x22. A previous owner removed the two-hole ride-cymbal mount on the drum—which created a problem. The bass drum is so shallow that the weight of the 13" tom pulls the drumset over! Luckily, with the help of collector Terry Keating we were able to find the right part and get back to the original factory specs. Now the ride cymbal acts as a counterbalance.

The snare drum pictured is the $6\frac{1}{2}$x14 Broadway. It was the most popular size until the next catalog introduced the $5\frac{1}{2}$x14 Shelly Manne model with a new double-sided lug. The strainer is the three-point Broadway, which was used for about twenty years. The Leedy extension butt plate was later used on Slingerland's Gene Krupa and Artist model snare drums. (By the way, the Leedy name is back on snare drums again. Nashville drum builder Sam Bacco is making beautiful recreations that are graced by Beavertail lugs and three-point strainers. They're being sold by Fred Gretsch Enterprises.)

Our featured kit has a nice, warm sound. It's great to know that a fifty-year-old musical instrument is still alive and kicking. We put a 1920s Leedy logo on the bass drum head, to celebrate the heritage that went from U.G. Leedy to Conn's C.D. Greenleaf, and then to Bud Slingerland. Between its Indianapolis and its Chicago incarnations, the Leedy name survived for over seventy years.

I'd value this set at $1,000, not a small piece of change. So go out and find yourself one of these elusive gems, made at 2249 Wayne Avenue in good old Chicago, Illinois.

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The Realities Of Auditions

Learning A Life Lesson

by Andy James

Have you ever had a dream about going to school or to work and suddenly realizing that you didn't have your pants on? Okay, remember that feeling, because that's exactly how your life will feel once you start auditioning for gigs: uncertainty...a bit of embarrassment...and an attempt to feel confident and in control of situations that, for the most part, will be completely *out* of your control.

How can I fully explain the emotional and mental ordeal that you must go through when you put everything you've learned as a drummer on the line for the first time? I've got it! Let me take you back to *my* first audition.

Responding To An Ad

When I saw an ad in a music magazine that said, "Pro touring band seeks drummer," I immediately circled the phone number. After all, I'd been playing drums for eight years. I'd played dozens of gigs in local bars, and everyone had told me I was a "great" drummer.

Now, when you respond to an ad that genuinely is for a "pro touring band," you will be calling a phone that rings directly on the band manager's desk. You won't be speaking with any musician in the band. So you can forget about discussing the bands you like, or getting a feel for the band, or trying to get a good vibe going between you and the band before you even audition. You will be speaking to a manager or an assistant who has a job to do—period. That job is to find a drummer to fill an open position in a professional touring band that they represent. They're not interested in establishing a relationship with you, and they could care less about what your interests are. All they want to know is when you will be sending them a press kit.

Illustration by Joe King

A What?

My next task was to find out exactly what a press kit was. I started thinking of ways to get a real press kit so that I could embellish its content and make it my own. So I called several clubs around town to see if they had any old press kits from bands or artists that had played their club. After obtaining several bands' press kits, I was humbled to see that most of the information involved past accomplishments and a very impressive history of the artist.

In my mind, I was finished! Before I had even arrived to audition, I couldn't get past the first hurdle. History? Past accomplishments? I had done nothing of any merit. That's why I was trying to audition in the *first* place—so I could have an actual band on my résumé.

Well, as we all know, you do the best you can. It's just like selling a used car: When you haven't done much, you try to make what you *have* done sound a bit better than it really is. After I'd outlined my "accomplishments," I had a friend take a black & white photo, got some 8x10 copies, and sent off my new press kit to the management company to see if I could score an audition.

Riiiiiiinnnnng!

It was them! They called *me*. They told me that they were holding auditions at SIR Studios on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. They

gave me three different audition times to choose from.

I made it. In my mind, I was the new drummer, period. Watch out Los Angeles, this kid from New York is coming to town to *audition.*

The management company then sent me a tape with six songs to learn. I started rehearsing day and night until I had the material down cold. I knew that when they saw me and my huge drumkit, the gig was mine.

Then, two weeks before I was to fly to Los Angeles, I got another call from the management company, this time asking me what size of drumkit I wanted to audition on. What size kit? Well, *my* kit, of course. Then I asked when they would be flying my drums to Los Angeles. At that point I was given the cold hard facts that I would not be auditioning on my drums. I would be using a rental kit.

I'd never played on anyone's drums but mine. They were set up perfectly for me. How in the world could I give 100% at an audition without my gear? Wouldn't they want to see how awesome my huge drumkit was?

After giving them the sizes I wanted, I started mentally preparing myself for this audition on a foreign drumset. I tried to convince myself that everything would be fine. The drums would be the same sizes. They would be top-of-the-line Sonor Signature drums in African bubinga wood rather than my preferred set of maple Ludwigs, but I could deal with that. After all, I was a professional with eight years of experience under my belt.

D-Day

Finally, the big day came. I flew to Los Angeles, and upon arrival had two hours to get from the airport to the studio for my audition. After all, I didn't want to wait around for an entire day at a hotel before auditioning. I wanted to get in there as soon as I landed, and get the gig!

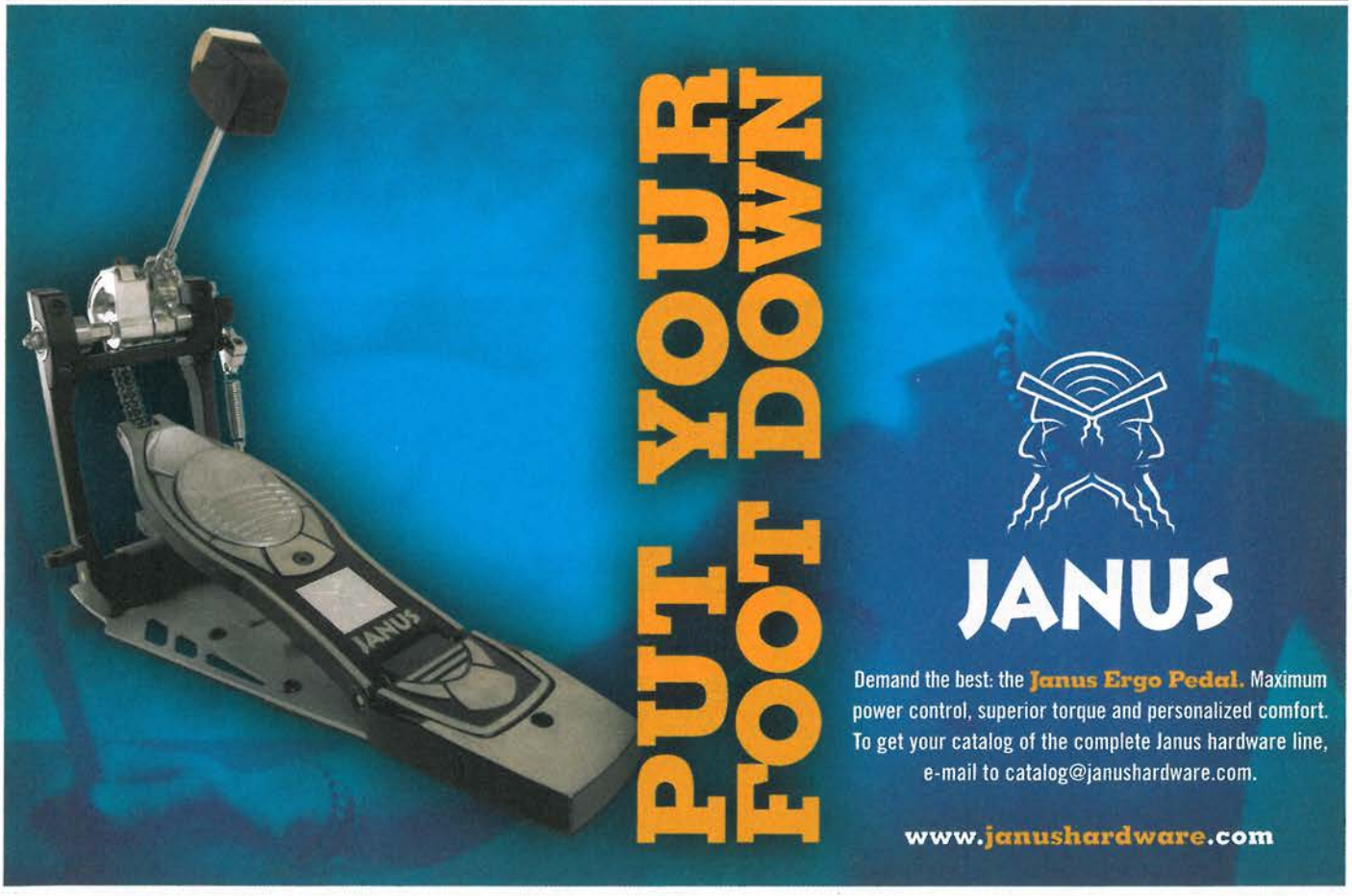
I arrived at the studio fifteen minutes before I was scheduled to audition. I went up to the counter and told them who I was, and that I had a kit reserved for the audition. When they wheeled the kit out on a dolly, I almost fainted. It had 26" bass drums, and equally huge rack and floor toms. It wasn't even close to what I had ordered. I asked if there was some confusion, and they said, simply, "That's all we have. Take it or leave it." My audition was now in five minutes, so I had no other choice but to take it.

As I started to prepare the kit, I suddenly realized that the tom holder was permanently fixed in a position such that I'd have to be eight feet tall to play the kit. I was freaking out! How could I do this audition now? These drums were unplayable!

I decided to take a deep breath, and just deal with what I had been given. Thankfully, the auditions were running behind (as you'll soon learn they always do), so I decided to try to bond with the other drummers who were auditioning. A bigger mistake could not have been made.

"You might as well go home, kid—this gig is mine," was the first bit of feedback from one of my auditioning comrades. "Dude, I know the bass player, so the gig was mine a week ago. They're just auditioning to make the manager happy," was yet another helpful bit of advice. It all put me in a less-than-positive frame of mind.

So, I decided to sit quietly and wait until the bell tolled for me. Then it happened...sort of. A man came out of the studio with a clipboard and said loudly,



Auditioning

"Next up is Randy Jammers." I'm thinking to myself, "Randy Jammers"? Could they possibly be talking about me? Andy James? Then they clarify it: "Randy Jammers from New York." Yep, it was me, and they didn't even have my name right. And of course, then came the verbal abuse from other auditioning drummers: "Dude, nice name. Go get 'em, *Jammers*."

Second Thoughts

Over the next thirty seconds I started analyzing the entire situation. A barrage of questions entered my mind at the same time. Was this really what I wanted to do? Could I handle this stress, time after time? Why did they ask me what drums I wanted when they didn't have what I wanted to begin with? Why did they even call me if they didn't even know my name? Did I waste my time and money to fly out to LA when one of the other guys was a shoe-in for the gig?

I put all of these thoughts out of mind and started to assemble the huge, unplayable drumkit I had been given to demonstrate my abilities on, not only to the manager, but now to the actual band.

They asked me what song I was comfortable with, and I said, "Any of the songs you sent me to learn." The audition began, progressed, and finished. They said thank you very much, everyone shook my hand, and away I went...back home to NYC.

I started rehearsing day and night until I had the material down cold. I knew that when they saw me and my huge drumkit, the gig was mine.

The Post-Game Analysis

It was a long flight home, and between the nervous sweats and shooting headache pains, I started to really think about my playing. Had I been any good? Did we groove as a band? Did I mess up? Finally, I realized that I couldn't remember a single thing about my playing!

I had been so caught up in the giant drumkit, the mispronounced name, and the other guys claiming the much sought-after gig, I had lost all focus on my playing. I felt like an incompetent beginner who had just been taught a huge lesson in life.

Several days went by, and I received a message to call the management company. I figured that they just wanted to let me down in person, and explain why I had not been hired for the gig. I deliberated for two days on whether or not I should even waste the time to return the call when I *knew* it was going to be a rejection. But, they had had the courtesy to call, so eventually—and reluctantly—I called them back.

I got the gig.

A New Lease On Life

After returning to Los Angeles to start rehearsing with the band, I finally got up enough nerve to ask the guitar player what made them decide to pick me. He said that out of thirty-odd drummers at the audition, I was the only one who, when asked what song I was comfortable with, said, "Any song you sent me to learn."

The most important advice I can give anyone who is facing their first (or even their tenth) audition is: Be yourself. If you're true to yourself—and you've done your homework—your attitude and professionalism will shine through, regardless of the stress and obstacles that may pop up. That will give you the best opportunity to get the gig. The above audition experience happened to me when I was seventeen years old. I still use the knowledge I gained from that experience today.

Andy James has toured with Savatage, The Zeros, and David Sweet. Since 1998 he's been a busy session drummer in Southern California, Seattle, and Miami.

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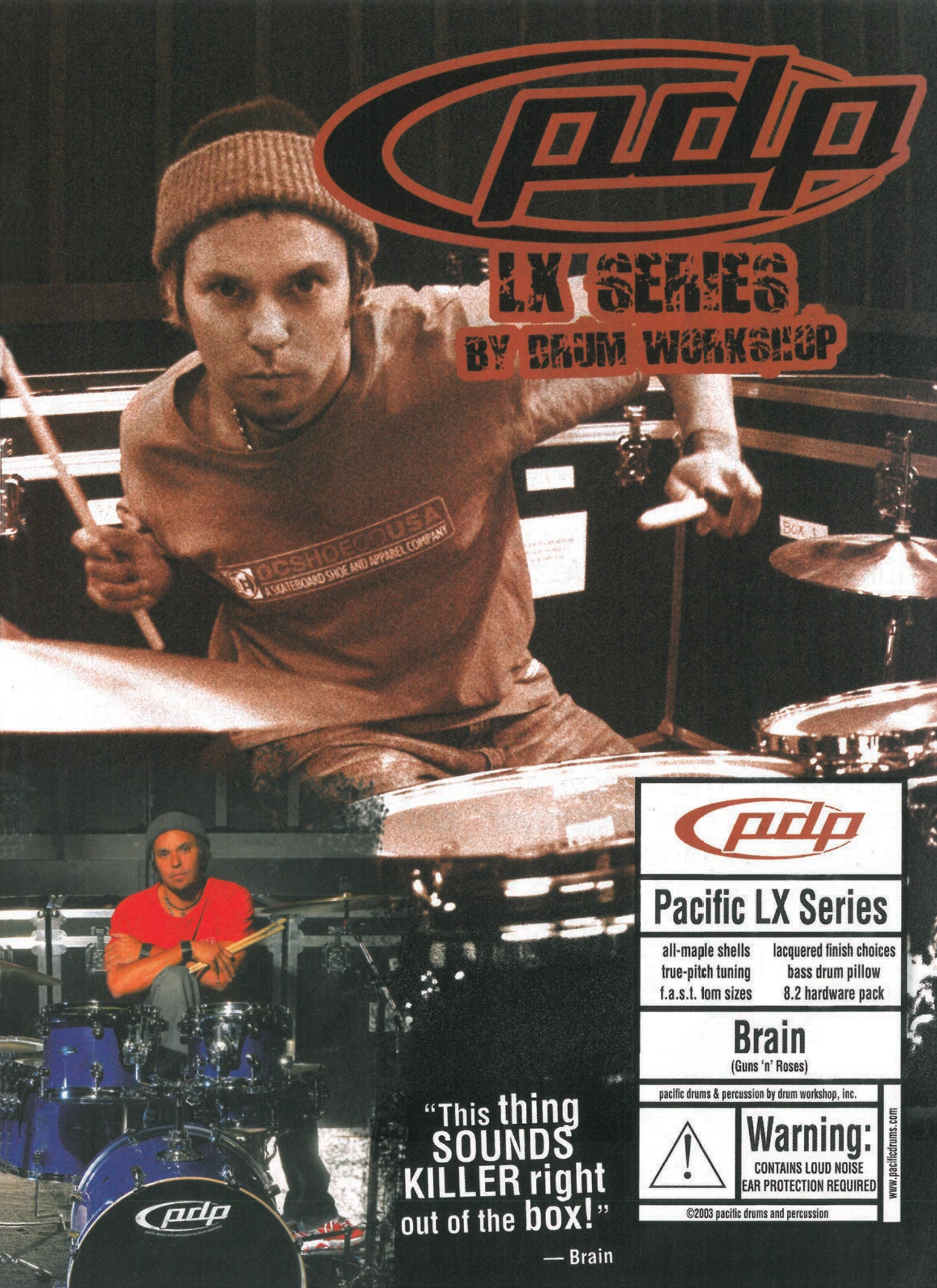
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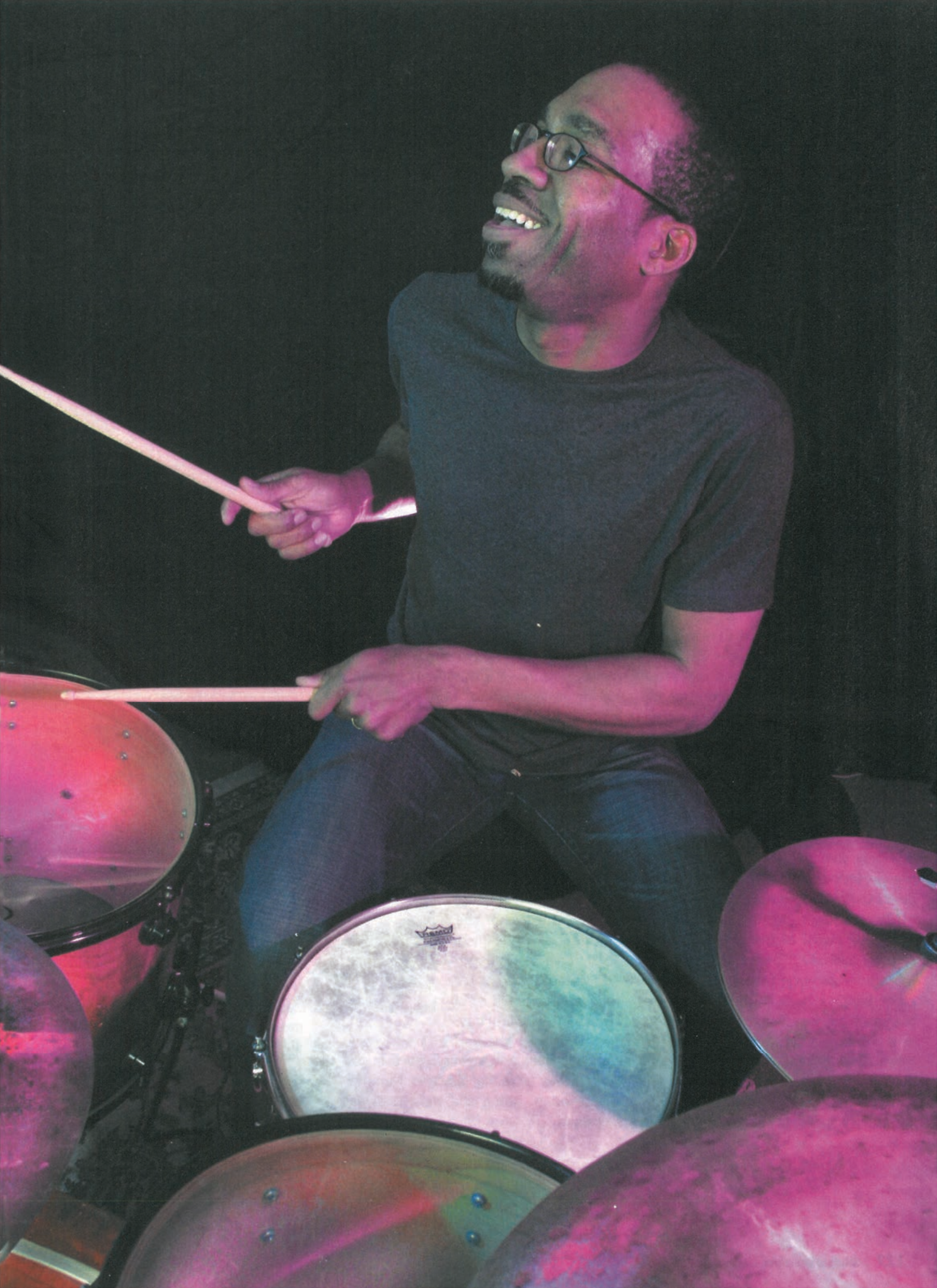
Ween's Claude Coleman

Border-Crossing

Story by Adam Budofsky • Photos by Paul La Raia

Ween possesses what is likely the most outrageous, genre-defying song catalog in modern rock. Though they're sometimes written off as a "joke" band, a quick listen to any Ween album reveals musicians not only versed in the rules of just about every genre of pop music, but able to break those rules with daring effect. Expertly walking the lines between taste and excess, sincerity and humor, Ween operates on a level of sophistication precious few pop acts approach. The range of emotion and style between, say, "Poop Ship Destroyer" and "Stay Forever" is simply mind bending.

Claude Coleman is the man responsible for drumistically supporting the kaleidoscopic world of Ween. It's a job *very* few drummers would be able to pull off.



A little history: In the mid-'80s, childhood friends Aaron Freeman and Mickey Melchiondo, aided by their own personal god, Boognish, carved a unique place on the new-music scene. Aaron (now Gene Ween) and Mickey (Dean Ween) soon assembled a proper live band to tour and flesh out album cuts. Odd-ball hits, notably "Push Th' Little Daisies," caught left-field attention. A ravenous fan cult grew, tape-trading like crazy and constructing virtual altars like WeenRadio.com. Meanwhile, the band's music became more sophisticated, retaining the obscure, "brown" elements, but now featuring increasingly outta-sight songwriting, top-notch playing, and a dead-on ear for detail.

In 2001 they created music for the sitcom *Grounded For Life*. "Appearances" on *South Park* and *Crank Yankers* further widened their reputation from that of brainy musical pranksters to genuine cultural touchstones. Critics, at least those who "got it," bowed down at their feet.

Claude Coleman has abetted this musical iconoclasm almost since the beginning. Known as an ace drummer on the fertile late-'80s New Jersey rock scene, Coleman also turned heads as a multi-instrumentalist of rare talent. Claude ran in the same circles as Deaner and Gener back in the day, and eventually became a pillar of the band's sound, especially during their infamous tours. An athletic rock drummer with an ear for jazz, Coleman is the perfect rhythmatist for a band as demanding, fun, and rocking as Ween.

Melchiondo, who has played some drums on nearly all the group's albums, recently told *MD*, "There's nothing I enjoy more than watching Claude play, even on other people's gigs. Because of Claude, the bar is set very high for what I look for in a drummer. And unlike many drummers, Claude makes a drumkit sound good. You can record him with just two mic's and he'll sound incredible."

Mickey went on to explain an additional job requirement for Coleman: mimicking the insane drum machine patterns Ween often uses on record. "I might have four ride cymbals going at once," Mickey laughs. "Claude will be like, Why did you program it that way? And I'll be like, Because I don't care how hard it is for you to figure it out!"

Perhaps the biggest reason Coleman works so well with Ween is his skill as a songwriter. In fact, Claude's aspirations as a complete performer, fronting his own band, Amandla, are as lofty as his drumming goals. Because he has such a good feel for song structure, Claude easily swings with the many moods of Ween, adding subtle shadings when required, or going out on a limb of excess when that approach is called for.

Aside from musical challenges, Claude has recently had to bear some heavy-duty physical ones as well. A nasty car wreck in 2002 left him wheelchair-bound for months. He still struggles with some limitations, though happily he's back behind the kit, recording tracks for Amandla's next album and touring behind Ween's latest, *Quebec*. It says something about Claude's value to the band that his temporary replacement was none other than the massively regarded Josh Freese.

Just prior to the band's performance at the Bonnaroo Festival in Manchester, Tennessee, and on the eve of the release of their first DVD, *Live In Chicago*, *MD* visited Claude at his recording studio in rural western New Jersey. We began with the past in front, gazing an hour east and twenty years in the past, when a young Newark drummer dreamed of being the next Stewart Copeland....

Claude spends a lot of quality time at his studio in rural Western New Jersey, just over the river from Ween's New Hope, Pennsylvania home.

Claude: My father was always into music, and he had pretty exceptional taste. For a person of his stature—being a black man growing up in the south, rising through the ranks of the Newark police department—he was into a pretty eclectic brew of sounds: jazz, and then Dylan and stuff like that. While he was in the police department, he put himself through law school. He became a practicing lawyer, then a legal analyst, then lieutenant, and then director of the police department. Now he's a superior court judge. He's intense, he's got a lot of personal power.

MD: Sounds like the kind of guy who would have a lot to say about the direction his son would take.

Claude: When I grew up I had all of these little gifts: I was a runner, I played a lot of tennis.... But my parents never steered me one way or another. It kind of happened on its own that I decided to stick with the drums.

MD: When did you really get into it?

Claude: I was in the school bands in elementary school. When my parents divorced we moved to Maplewood, New Jersey, and the school system there was very supportive of the arts. Lauryn Hill went there, for instance. It was easy to get involved.

MD: Did you play in cover bands?

Claude: Yeah, tons of them. We did The Cure, The Police, Squeeze, The Clash, R.E.M....

MD: Who were your big musical influences at the time?

Claude: I was big on Stewart Copeland when I first started playing. In fact you might say I obsessed on him. [laughs] I was the guy around town who played like Stewart. I had the same setup—I didn't have the Octobans, but I had a six-piece kit—I even copied the graffiti he had on his drumheads. You had to be a super-freak obsessive fan to know about that. But I had his licks down too. I was into all sorts of music, but as far as playing drums, he was it. He embodied everything that I wanted to be.

MD: Like what?

Claude: Energy, originality, musicality. Even then I could tell he was making great music with his parts. I just found it very stimulating.

MD: Was there a time when you felt you had to get out of this reverence mode?

Claude: Yeah, it was a painfully slow process understanding that I couldn't play everyone's songs like Stewart. But that wasn't until later, when I started playing with songwriters. I realized things had to be a bit more steady, more linear. And then I got into other drummers, like Ringo, and all sorts of other music came at me. So I just started incorporating it all and understanding the full spectrum of music and drumming—where it can go, what can be done with it.

MD: Did you ever take private drum lessons?

Claude: My only lessons were in high school—music theory class, marching band, orchestra, jazz band. I didn't see anyone on my own until I studied with Keith Copeland at Mason Gross College.

I never thought I'd be a jazz musician, but I did think that it was something I was going to need to learn to play well. I was really passionate about it, so I was excited to study with Keith. He was almost never around, because he was on the road a lot. But the six or seven one-on-one lessons I had with him were the most life-affecting lessons I ever had. I almost felt like I learned everything I needed to know just by being around him.

MD: What in particular did Keith teach you?

Claude: I learned how to swing instantly when I saw Keith do it.

MD: How?

Claude: You just felt the pocket and the time, and you understood it immediately. He had a really hard swing, and I've always been attracted to jazz drummers who have a hard swing. You just felt it, it was undeniable. It was so much easier after that, and it was really deep.

There's a story about the Dalai Lama. This guy takes a picture of a flower to the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama looks at it,

Apocalyptic Playing

Claude's Best

Artist	Album
Amandla	Falling Alone
Ween	White Pepper
Ween	Live At Stubbs
Ween	Live In Chicago (DVD/CD)
Moistboyz	Moistboyz II
Hub	Hub
Tom Clark	Cross-Eyed And Bow-Legged

Claude's Favorites

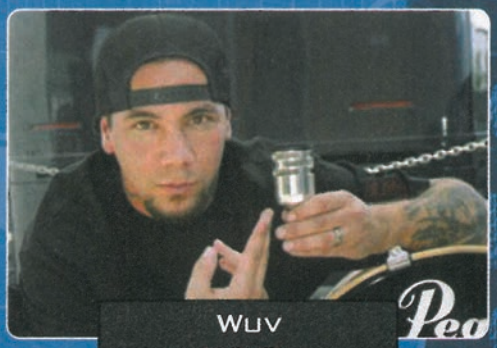
Artist	Album	Drummer
Grand Funk Railroad	Grand Funk	Don Brewer
Pat Metheny	Bright Size Life	Bob Moses
Van Morrison	Veedon Fleece	Allan Schwartzberg, Dahaud Shaar
Wu Tang Clan	Enter The Wu-Tang	programmed
Donny Hathaway	Live	Fred White
Jackie Mittoo	The Keyboard King At Studio One	Bunny Williams
Jimi Hendrix & Band Of Gypsys	Live At The Fillmore East, CD I	Buddy Miles
Minutemen	Double Nickels On The Dime	George Hurley

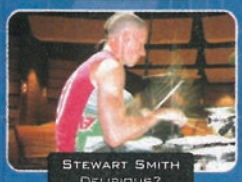
Further Props

Metal: Bill Ward, Dave Lombardo, early Lars Ulrich. **Rock:** John Bonham, Mitch Mitchell, Mick Fleetwood (whose style I borrow as a template for many tunes), Ringo (whose style is a template for almost every human music-maker alive). **Jazz:** Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones. **R&B:** Howard Grimes, Al Jackson. **Punk Rock:** The mighty D.H. Peligro. **Overseas drummers:** Phil Selway. **Prog:** Bill Bruford, Neil Peart. **Hip-Hop:** ?uestlove. **Multi-Instrumentalists:** Stevie Wonder (I love the way he plays his cymbals so colorfully), Paul McCartney, Prince (one of the funkiest alive), Todd Rundgren. **Local Cats:** Drummers who I've always found to be absolutely fantastic and as inspiring as any well-knowns: Andy Demos (from Tiny Lights and the jazz/folk trio Solar), Scotty Burns, and Sim Cain (who was a hero of sorts to me that I've admired from the beginning of my musical life). Plus techno music, drum 'n' bass, all other cultural musics that I consider influential and inspiring.

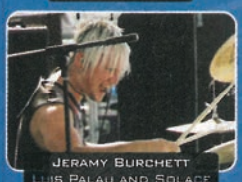
Kyle Mitchell
Kutless

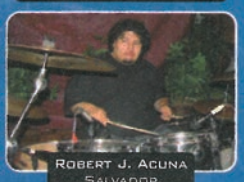
Zoro

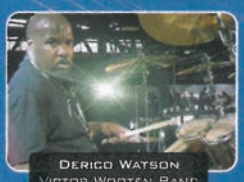

Wuv
P.O.D.

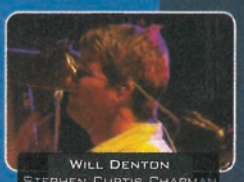

Stewart Smith
Delirious?

Zurn
Rock N Roll Worship Circus


Jeramy Burchett
Luis Palau and Solace

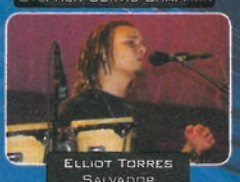

Robert J. Acuna
Salvador

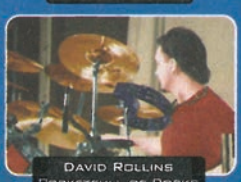

Derico Watson
Victor Wooten Band


Will Denton
Stephen Curtis Chapman

Lester Estelle
Pillar

Luis Conte


Elliot Torres
Salvador


David Rollins
Pocketfull of Rocks

Julio Figueroa
Tommy Walker CA Worship Band

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says thank you, and gives it back to the guy. The guy is like, No, I want you to have it, but the Dalai Lama says, I already do, you just gave it to me. People who are that profound and have that kind of sense about them can sort you out in like two minutes. Keith Copeland was like that; I got stuff from him that'll last twenty-five years, just by watching him play.

MD: It's tempting to say that people with that much ability were born with it. But there's usually a lot of work involved too, right?

Claude: Yeah, but so much of it *is* innate. To be a really good drummer, you don't have to be good on the drumset. I read a story about Omar Hakim getting the Sting gig. He was at a dinner table banging with forks and knives, and then Sting was like, You're hired. I got a gig exactly like that once. I was working at a record store and these hip-hop guys said they needed a drummer. I banged these beats in the stockroom, and they freaked out. I got the gig.

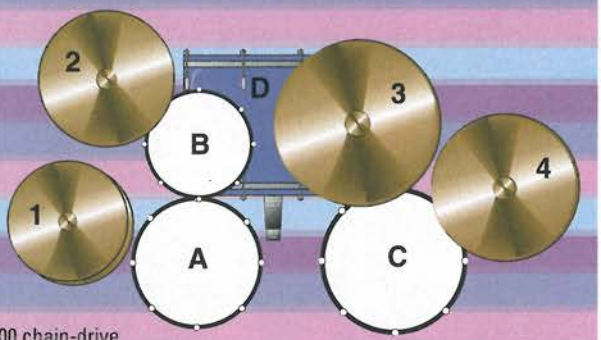
MD: Omar once equated being behind the drumset with dancing; you have to be comfortable with your own body.

Claude: I once wanted to drum with an African drum group for a dance class. I

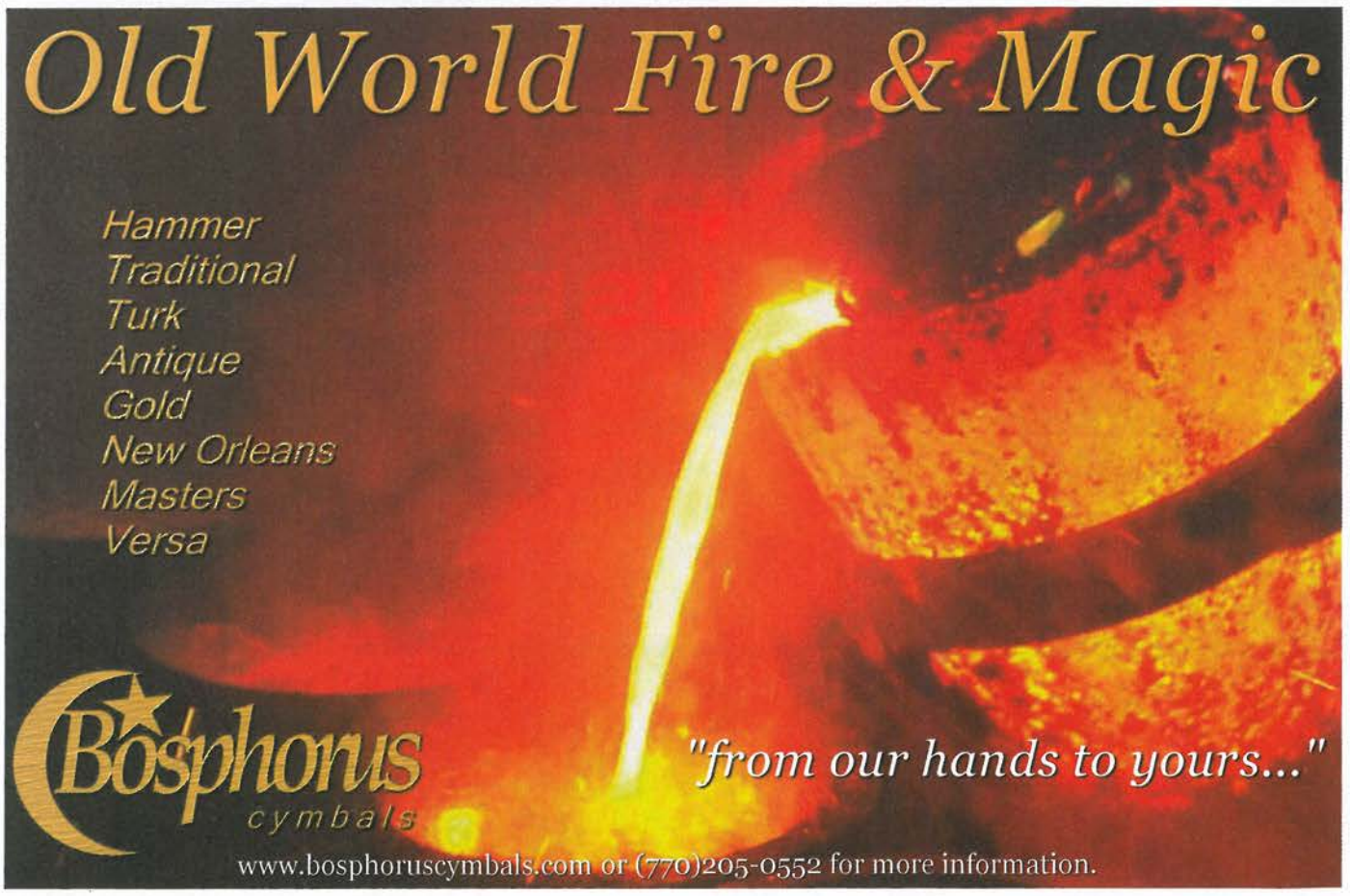
Claude's Kit

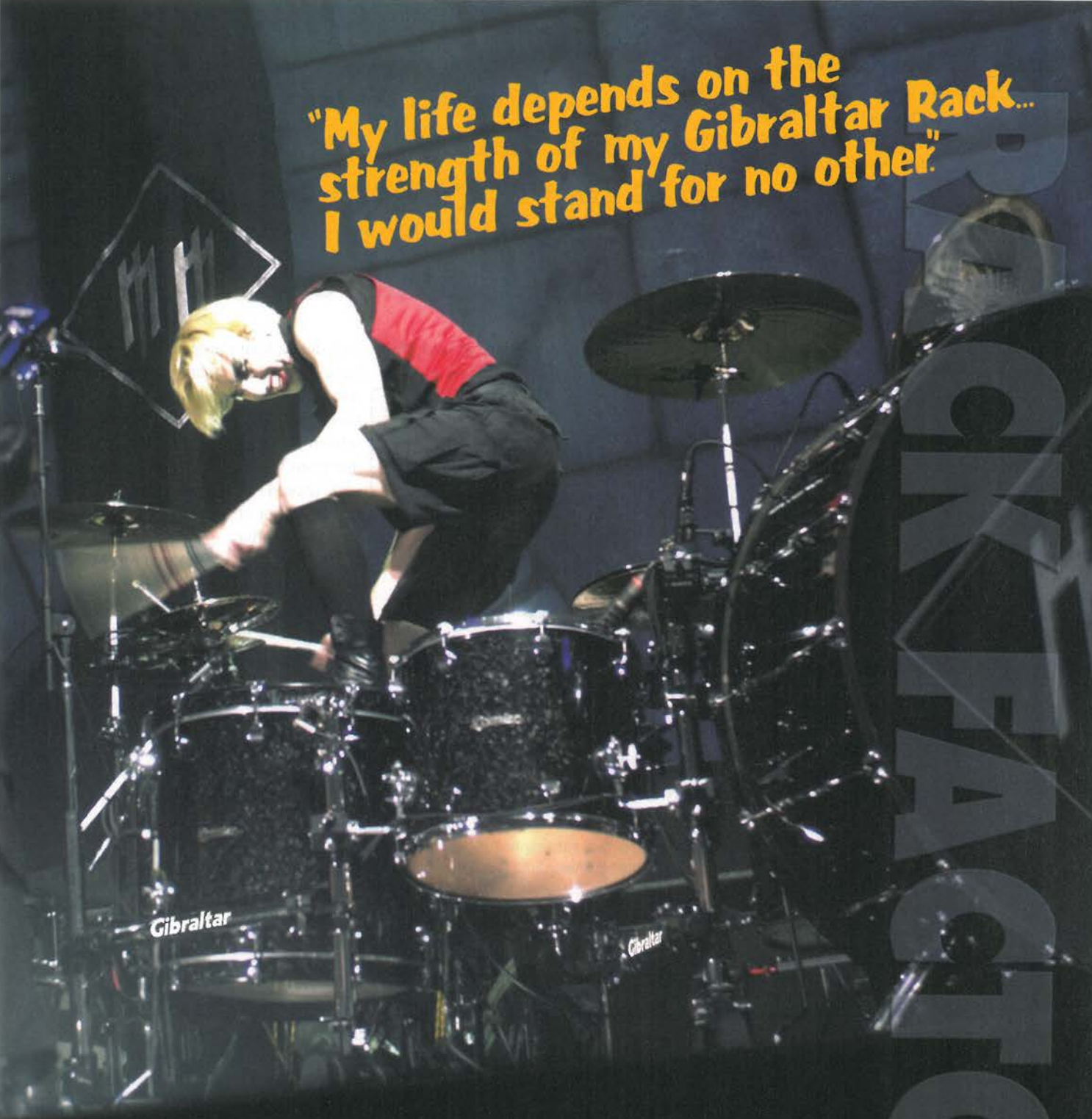
Drums: Drum Workshop
A. 6x14 Tama wood snare
B. 11x12 tom
C. 14x16 floor tom
D. 18x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" K Custom Dark hi-hats
2. 16" K Custom Dark crash
3. 20" K Custom Dark ride
4. 18" K Custom Dark crash



Hardware: DW, including a DW 5000 chain-drive bass drum pedal with a Danmar beater
Heads: Remo FiberSkyn 2 on snare batter, Evans Hydraulics on toms, Aquarian Superkick II on bass drum
Sticks: Vater 5B model (hickory with wood tip)
Electronics: Roland SPD-6 multi-pad unit, Akai MPC2000XL





Every Marilyn Manson concert is an experience in shock therapy. The most powerful of jolts no doubt emanate from the rhythmic stamp of drummer Ginger Fish.

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went there and watched them, and I was told I had to take the dance class before I could drum for them. So I did, because dancing to that music is parallel to playing the instrument.

MD: While you were at Mason Gross, your band Skunk got a deal with Twin/Tone Records. How long were you in school at that point?

Claude: About a semester and a half. Things moved really quickly for Skunk. After we got signed they wanted to tour. I was the only one in school, so it was obvious I had to turn to the school of rock. We did the van thing and toured and toured, including a long European tour opening for Babes In Toyland, another Twin/Tone band. After that tour the band broke up, so I found myself without a band and not in school. Not that I was worried, because at that point I was so immersed in the slacker-rock lifestyle that it seemed perfectly fitting to be out of a job, eating cheese sandwiches. [laughs]

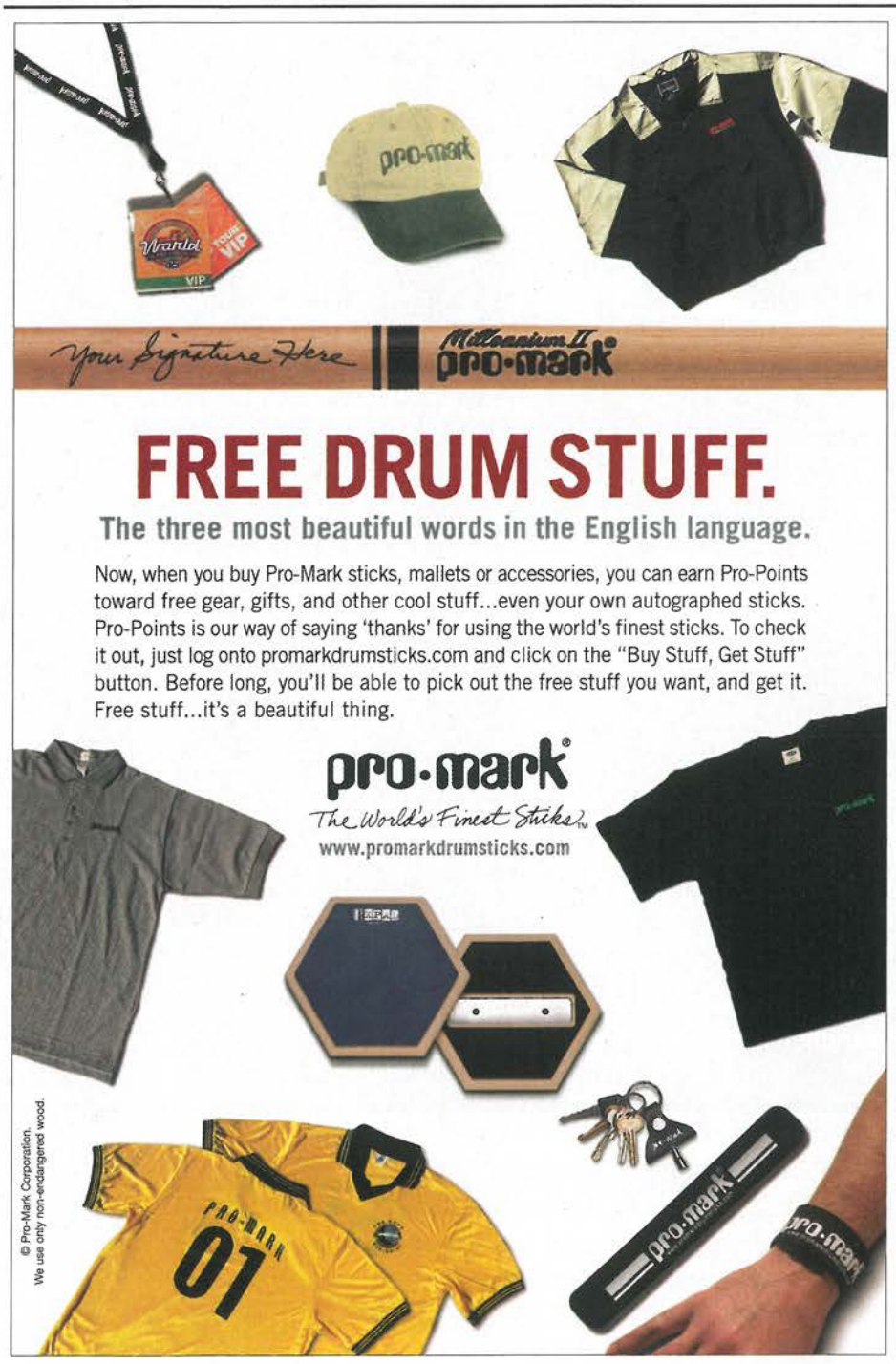
> "I'm in overdrive to push myself to heal. Lately I've been playing gigs like they were my last ones, like, You're gonna *remember* seeing me playing drums."

MD: When did you become involved with Ween?

Claude: Ween had actually gotten signed to Twin/Tone through a gig they did with my band. After Skunk broke up, I started hanging out more with those guys. I was going down to this place they were living in called The Pod, which became the title of their second record, and I was crashing on their couch. *The Pod* was put out by [underground rock impresario] Kramer, and I think it was his idea to make a band out of Ween and do some shows.

At that time the band was called "The Ween," and the gigs were really cool, because it was all that early stuff, which to me is the most punk rock stuff you've ever heard. We did a two-week tour of England, and that was amazingly miserable, but an incredible bonding experience, at least for me, Mickey, and Aaron.

For the next record, *Pure Guava*, Aaron and Mickey toured with just the two of them and a tape deck. I was still hanging around with them, though. When it came around to the next album, *Chocolate And Cheese*, they wanted to make Ween more of a traditional live band, and I just kind of naturally fell into the role. I wasn't really the first choice for drums on the recording; it was always drum machine before anything, and if it wasn't machine, it was Mickey. He always did the natural drums on their early records, so he was still playing on that record as well. I did do a bunch of percussion stuff, though, like on "Voodoo Lady." When they toured behind



that album, that's when the band became kind of a set thing.

MD: How do you approach Mickey's parts live?

Claude: I honor each one of them lick for lick. He's very specific, down to ride cymbals. And I'm perfectly fine with that.

I vividly remember hanging out with those guys at Andrew Weiss's house, working on a Skunk record, and Mickey and Aaron showed up there with the *Pod* 4-track cassette that they had just done. They were playing it for Andrew for the first time, and they were delirious, snickering and laughing. As far as I can remember, what we heard coming out of the speakers that day was exactly how that album would later sound. They always have a grand idea of what they want.

MD: So Mickey has pretty good facility at the drums?

Claude: Yeah! He's a totally capable drummer. I mean he's not a flashy showman, but he has good ideas.

MD: How are you presented with the material?

Claude: What usually happens is they'll do a demo of a tune. If that's the case, they'll come to the rest us with the demo, then we just play what the demo is. There's usually no reason to change anything. I might stretch things a bit or add a subtle stylistic thing to it. Now, if it happens that I'm there while they're in the process of recording their first version of a song, then I'll be playing drums on it. It's kind of circumstantial. I'm like that with my own music, which is why I end up doing everything. It's mostly a matter of practicality.

MD: After *Chocolate And Cheese* came the album *12 Golden Country Greats*, where they hired all these authentic country & western musicians, like drummer Buddy Harman.

Claude: Touring behind that album was one of the highlights of my career. It was a full band of seasoned Nashville session players. Not neo-country—they were all genuinely amazing traditional players. I was never more afraid than when I was flying to Nashville the day before the month-long tour behind that record. I was freaking. Here I was, this black kid from New Jersey coming down to Nashville to play country tunes with these lap steel and fiddle players. But they were such professionals, it wasn't an issue. It was just about the tunes. They made it very relaxed.

MD: How long did you stay nervous?

Claude: I was freaking out for a while during the first rehearsal. I was trying to get the feel, which is the most important thing for that music. If you're not living it, you're faking it, so it's just a matter of how well you can fake it. [laughs] But after an hour and a half I felt pretty confident about how it was going, and nobody was iffy about the energy. After that it was smooth sailing; every night was the greatest gig I would ever do.

MD: How did you approach those feels? Did you go out and buy Johnny Cash records to cop the grooves?

Claude: No, because I identify with country music, and I write some tunes in a country vein. So I just kind of went down there with my own natural resources. Again, that stuff is really about the feel, the linear smoothness. It's a coasting, steady, pocket thing. I just tried as hard as I could to put the feel in the right place. I think it worked well. We made a great live record from that tour.

MD: The *12 Golden Country Greats* album is such an interesting chapter in rock history. You've got Ween's crazy ideas being played in this traditional manner. Ween walks lines like that beautifully. A lot of the reviews of that album didn't really get that, though.

Claude: Not many people understand Ween in general. We're really easy to write off as a humor band. The humor doesn't even comprise most of the music at this point, but even when there is a literal joke, there's authenticity too. Not many artists have those kinds of cross-references. It's too complicated for people to accept. But Aaron and Mickey are influenced by anything and everything, so it only makes sense that their creative output reflects that. In that sense, Ween is the most common-sense thing there is. It fits the bill for just about everything I feel.

MD: Are there specific Ween tracks that you're particularly proud of?

Claude: Generally I think the Ween studio cuts I've done are pretty tame. And I'm not ashamed of that by any means. Some of my favorite drummers are those sort of invisible guys—feel drummers, groove drummers who you don't notice, but who support the music. Though, now that I'm thinking about it, on *White Pepper*, which is the first album where the band played on every song, there's a song called "She's Your Baby" that I remember doing some nice brush work on. I was trying to get all Russ Kunkel on it, that light supportive thing, as if I was playing with Joni Mitchell. I think that might be the song I'm most proud of.

MD: What other songs come to mind?

Claude: "Mutilated Lips": I kind of produced that song with Aaron. He told me he wanted an Amandla production on that. On "Even If You Don't," I was going for a Roger Taylor/Queen thing. I don't think I totally achieved it, but I tried. On "Exactly Where I'm At," we got the sickest snare sound. The snares were tuned down to like no tension, but when I hit it hard it sounded amazing. "Stroker Ace" is pretty great. That was originally a drum machine song. This actually happens a lot. Mickey will write a tune with a drum machine and we'll record it, and I'll have to play along to the drum machine. I've done this with The Moistboyz [Mickey's side project]. Playing along with a drum machine is not exactly like playing along to a click, because it's drum sounds, and it's usually this blazing-fast double bass thing, screaming in my headphones.

MD: What do want to accomplish playing in Ween?

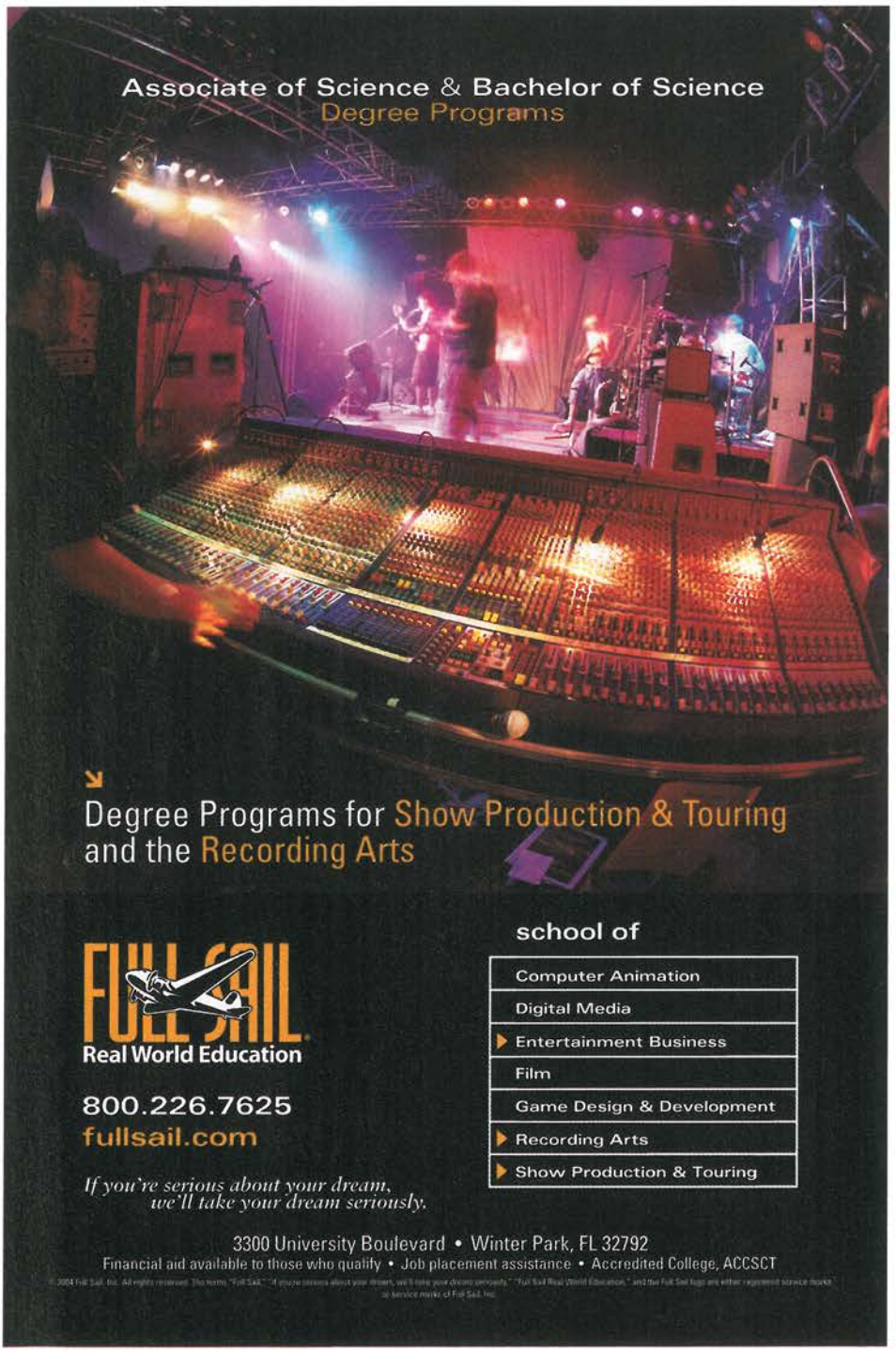
Claude: I think more than anything I just want to be involved in the beginning process of a song, before it becomes a recording process. I think it's kind of leaning toward that now. As long as I'm moving in that direction, that'll make me happier and give me a greater sense of "Ween worth."

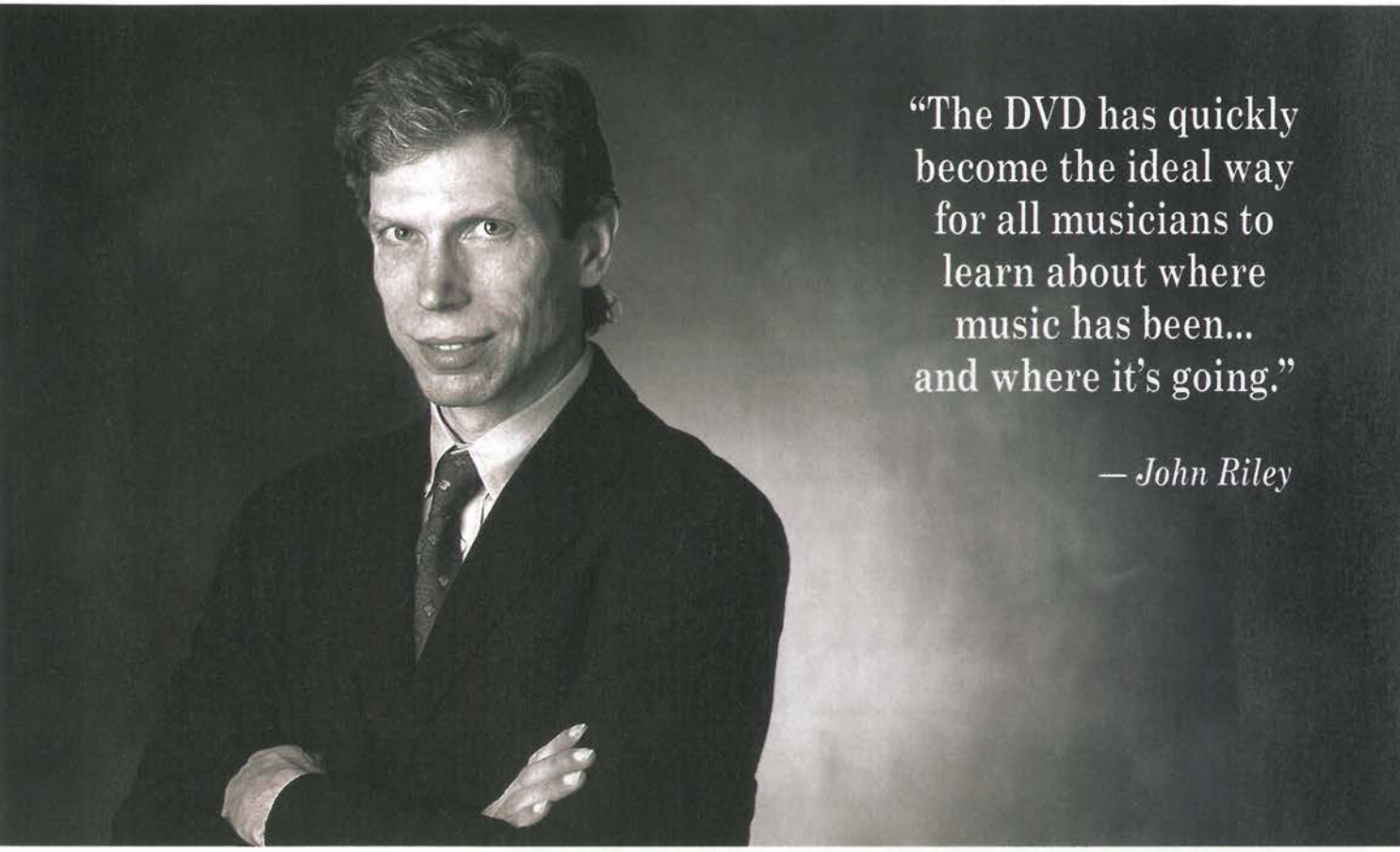
MD: Can you identify any specific challenges?

Claude: A lot of my challenges are related to my recent accident. I'm still trying to get past some limitations.

MD: Can you explain exactly what happened?

Claude: It happened on August 7, 2002. I was traveling west on Route 78, and traffic stopped suddenly. I was a bit too close to the car in front of me, so I pulled off to the left to avoid hitting it. There was a tractor





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trailer behind me, and he was too close to me to stop, so he just kind of kept going and rammed my car and shot it across the median, and I spun around and ended up in oncoming traffic. Then I got T-boned. The steering wheel was broken off, they had to cut the top of the car off to get me out....

It was kind of tragedy on top of tragedy. They put me in a hospital in Newark, and somehow the staff filed away all of my identification, essentially making me a John Doe. I laid in a hospital bed for two days, in and out of consciousness, and nobody was able to be contacted. But they couldn't do surgery without consent. Meanwhile, my parents and my wife and all my friends were hanging missing-person flyers, freaking out. Eventually the hospital put a notice in the newspaper, and that's how my mother found me.

So I had a shattered pelvis, a severe concussion, and constant vertigo, and I couldn't lift my arm or move my left side at all. I was in the hospital for over a month, and I was in a wheelchair for two months after that. At some point along that crappy, miserable journey, I was told by a doctor that I was going to heal and be alright, but it was mostly up to me. And that's kind of when I knew I was going to be okay. I have a lot of discipline and strength, and I knew it was just going to be a matter of time. It turns out it was only about five months. I was back behind the kit two weeks after I started walking again. But it was a wretched time, and I'm still dealing with the effects. It changed my life forever.

MD: Did you have any practice routine to get back your drumming skills?

Claude: I sat with a pad every other day. And now before gigs I have to warm up my hands, especially in the colder weather, because my circulation is affected. But that's been really good, because I hit the stage and I'm nice and loose.

In a way, I'm almost a better drummer now. My body is in overdrive to heal. And mentally I'm in overdrive to push myself to heal. So these gigs that I've been doing lately, I'm playing them like they were my last ones, like, You're gonna *remember* seeing me playing drums. So I'm kind of bringing another level of intensity to the whole thing.

MD: It must have been tough to see them bring other drummers in for the latest album.

Claude: When I was finally out of the hospital, watching the band go back on the road, and then listening to the feedback—that was a little hard to take. But I'm a patient guy, and I knew it was just a matter of time. I didn't really feel any threat to my job, because, well, I'm just so amazing. [laughs] But seriously, that part was hard.

MD: Live, how do you approach the songs from *Quebec*?

Claude: I stay true to the record. It's a shame I wasn't able to be on the album, because I think I would have done a nice job representing those tunes. Not that Josh Freese and Sim Cain didn't do anything but a stand-up job.

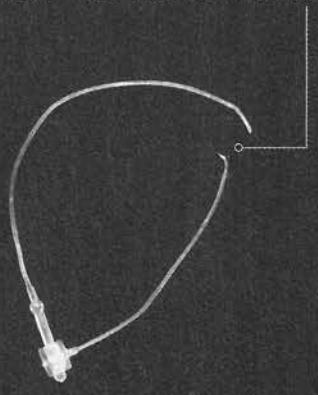
MD: When you play live you use electronic pads. How do you use them?

Claude: There are a couple of tunes where I'll trigger samples, like "Spinal Meningitis," where I trigger the triangle.

MD: Sometimes you play along to a drum machine too.

Claude: There are a couple of tunes. "Roses Are Free" has a drum pattern that's

PLASTIC TIES? WE DON'T THINK SO.



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"A crucial mistake drummers make is not seeing themselves as part of the song, but rather as drumming *to* the song. There's a big difference."

pretty much impossible to emulate, plus it's got sounds on it that can't be duplicated. I love playing to the drum machine. I always found it to be easy. I play to a click pretty well too.

MD: What's your monitor situation? Do you have in-ears?

Claude: No, I can't stand them. I do the live monitor thing. Generally Aaron's vocal is the loudest thing, then Mickey's guitar, then my kit is kind of underneath all that. We're a loud band, and I have to hear what I'm doing.

MD: Do you have a particular mindset about soloing?

Claude: The soloing thing came at the end of a pretty self-indulgent era of Ween.

MD: So that's not a regular feature of a Ween show?

Claude: No. Any instrumental solo is pretty much the most self-indulgent thing you can do. Not that it's any less entertaining; people dig it. When I *do* do it, I don't have a game plan. I like to be very orchestral, though, to make you listen. My favorite soloists are the real musical ones. I just got this Herbie Hancock box set, and there's material with Tony Williams. His solos crack me up. I just try to envision what Herbie and Miles were doing in the control room while Tony is doing these comical, abstract solos.

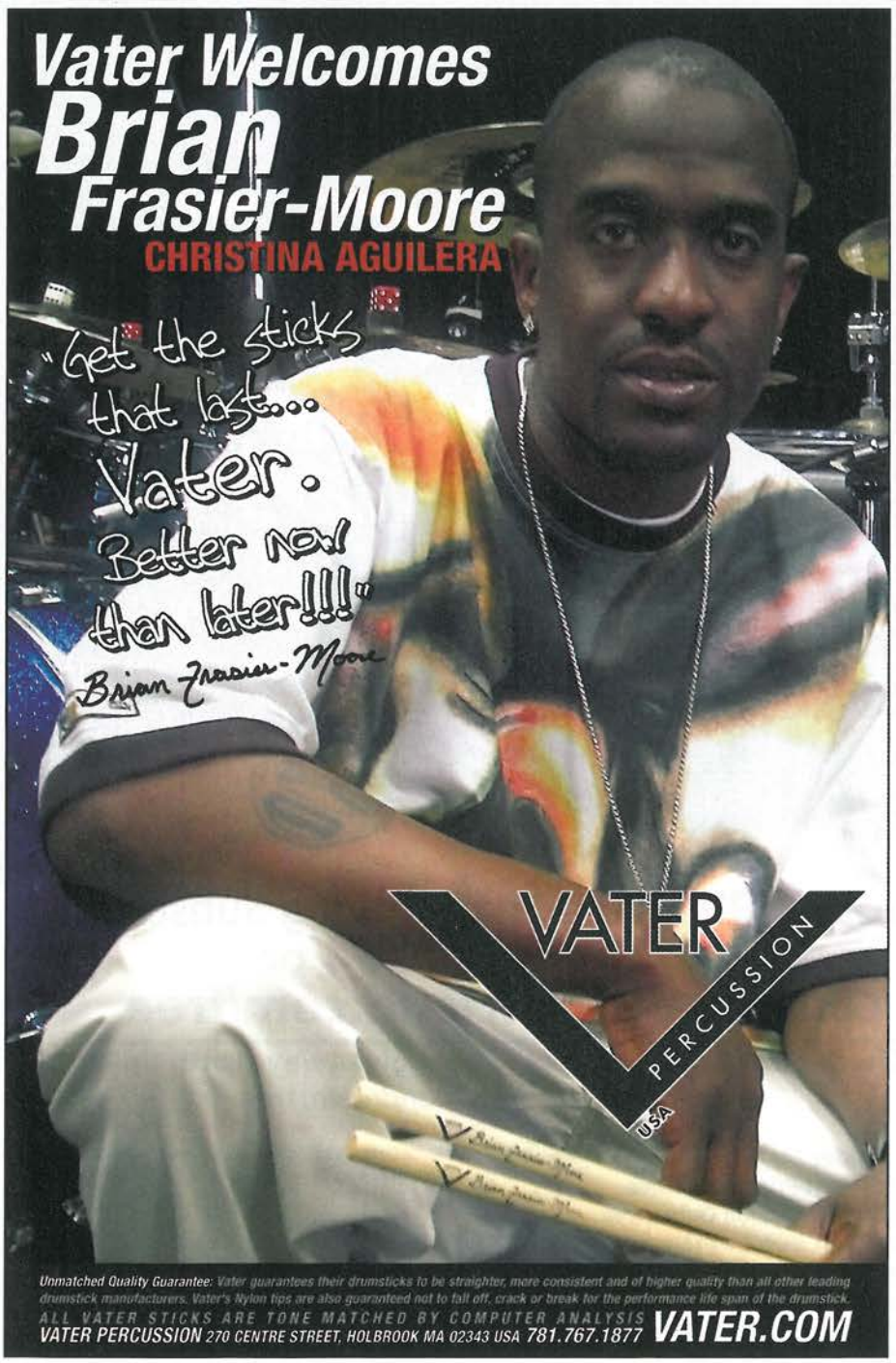
MD: Is stamina an issue for you? Some of the solos you have done are very long.

Claude: I don't know why, but it doesn't seem to be an issue with me. I have an athletic background, and I'm in good shape, so maybe that helps. But also, there's so many different kinds of music going on in a Ween show. It's a constantly stimulating thing. There are times when we finish and I'm like, That was two and half hours? Can we play some more? [laughs]

MD: Let's talk about your solo project, Amandla.

Claude: If I could get Amandla out there and make more of a career for myself making music, I would definitely be doing it. I'll be pushing this new record hard, because these are the best songs I've done. I've already made the decision to be out front, and I'm auditioning drummers, which is a funny thing. The feel is the most important thing, flash is unimportant. A good drummer only uses technique and chops to communicate good musical ideas. I want to hear good drumming, not good chops.

MD: Name one thing many drummers do



wrong.

Claude: If it's a rock drummer, it's not rocking.

MD: Define rocking.

Claude: Rocking is propelling the music while supporting it. Not rocking is playing without supreme, creatively driven passion, leaving your heart out of an art form that is engendered by the heart. I'm playing for the apocalypse, whether it's in front of 15,000 people or 15. That's the only way ever I've known. Passion lives in the quietest musical moment to the most explosive. Just because you're hitting hard, it doesn't mean you're rocking.

Also, don't play the same groove everybody else is playing. I think drummers need to be a little more inclusive of the history of music, if they want to be included in the history of music *themselves*.

There's something lacking in rock today, and it comes from this copycat way that things are going. It also comes from a lack of musicality. Take Dave Grohl: If you listen to those Nirvana songs, there are identifiable parts. He's not just banging away and pretending that he's rocking. He's making music. His advantage is that he's a songwriter, and maybe that's the crucial mistake that drummers make: They don't see themselves as part of the song, they see themselves as drumming *to* the song. There's a big difference.

Drumming can do a lot of subtle things to a song. But you have to open yourself up to the tune and push the creative boundaries. Put on a Thin Lizzy record. That to me is the definition of how to rock properly. It's unapologetic, kicking ass every step of the way, and at the same time it's musical. It's not just a lazy backbeat.

MD: What are your feelings on single vs. double bass drums?

Claude: If I were to have a double bass setup, I would have different-sized drums, to get two different sounds. But I've always just played single. I've played double for fun, but my double bass chops…I'm not gonna play any speed-metal gigs.

MD: Your single-pedal speed is pretty fast, though. Did you ever do any specific work on that?

Claude: Just practicing on my own. I think a lot of it is about balance. If there isn't too much weight dispensed throughout the lower region of your body, it's easier to keep your ankle a little bit elevated over the pedal, so you can get some speed out of it. I definitely kept that in mind over the years.

MD: Did you ever do any experiments with seat height?

Claude: Oh, yeah. Seat height is the one completely crucial issue of the drumset to me. If I let other people play my drums, I let them move anything around, but never raise or lower my seat, because it's everything—distribution of weight, independent coordination…. I might still raise or lower my seat height maybe half an inch or so. I don't have any memory locks on my drumset. My roadie marks it with tape, but invariably I change it, because it's always different, depending on the riser, the stage, and my whole perspective on how I'm seeing myself. So it's a work in progress.

MD: How far forward do you sit?

Claude: I have long limbs, so I probably sit a little further back than most drummers. Generally I try to keep my legs as close to a right angle with the floor as possible.

MD: You ride with both hands. Did you ever work on that?

Claude: That was Keith Copeland's influence. When I studied with him, I had to perform exercises with both hands. I'd have to play the swing pattern on cymbal, then the melody on the snare, and then switch hands. I did so much of that, it became comfortable to ride with either hand. I found that it really opens everything up. I think you get more dynamic control of the snare; you can really crack it because your arms aren't crossed.

MD: How about stick grip?

Claude: Back in my Stewart Copeland days, I was into traditional grip. Anything Stewart was, I was. [laughs] Then eventually I moved to a French matched grip, with my thumb over the top of the stick. That was a natural evolutionary process.

MD: Do you have strong feelings about equipment?

Claude: I'm very relaxed about equipment. I could play the crappiest drumset and be happy. It doesn't even have to be a four-piece set. I've often played a three-piece, and I've recorded with kick/snare/hats.

MD: What are your thoughts on drum tones?

Claude: I've felt this for a long time, and it's been confirmed by studio engineers: All drums have their own natural tones, so

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MD: How about muffling?

Claude: I'm an anti-muffling kind of guy. I like the kick drum with a lot of tone, but I do play in a rock band, so my tone is a little drier. As far as muffling, I use a thin pillow. Most of the muffling is provided by a ring built into the Aquarian Superkick head I use. The pillow is used mostly to control the front head.

MD: How about the snare drum?

Claude: I don't ever dampen the snare drum. That's kind of 1983.

MD: How about head tension?

Claude: I like a tight head but also a lot of depth to the sound, because I can't stand super-tight snares that don't really sound like snares. That drives me crazy. A wider sound fits for all the kinds of music I do. I do a lot of grace notes, so something in between works for me.

MD: How much singing do you do with Ween?

Claude: I do a fair amount of background singing.

MD: Any tips on singing and drumming simultaneously?

Claude: I've always approached the voice as another limb that needs its own independent coordination. It's always felt natural for me to sing and play at the same time. I've never consciously worked on it.

MD: Since you're a multi-instrumentalist, do you still identify yourself as a drummer?

Claude: I struggle with that from time to time, because I like to consider myself a songwriter. I don't think it's really important to have one kind of identity. Sometimes I find myself in situations where I could jump up and suggest something for a bass part or an arrangement or a mic' placement, but I'll just kind of stick to the role of drummer, and that's fine with me too. I'll just take those ideas and use them elsewhere.

MD: How about when you were growing up and into Stewart Copeland? Did you consider yourself a drummer first then?

Claude: Funny enough, Stewart was the guy who inspired me along my multi-instrumental path. When his Klark Kent

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record came out, I was like, Yes! This is what I want to do, make music all by myself, quirky music that's not exactly great but not exactly bad. [laughs] But I think it's important to recognize yourself as a *musician*, even if you're "just a drummer" or "just a bassist," and to try to really understand those other components of music.

MD: So, what are your immediate plans?

Claude: We're going to go back out and do Bonnaroo and continue to tour more behind this record. We recently needed to take a bit of a break. We're a band that plays long and hard and parties longer and harder. [laughs] Mickey and Aaron are putting together a new studio so they can have a better recording environment, and maybe after this little bit of touring they'll go back to work on the next record. There are areas we've yet to tour, like Australia and Japan and some parts of the States. But ultimately I have no idea where this is going; I'm along for the ride as much as any Ween fan is.

Ween Live Sound Engineer
Kirk Miller
Soundchecking Essentials

by Adam Budofsky

Ween's long-time live sound engineer, Kirk Miller, has worked just about every live scenario imaginable in the past twenty-odd years, from tiny clubs to enormous halls. *MD* recently picked Kurt's brain about that ancient ritual of live drumming, the soundcheck.

What's the most common mistake drummers make regarding live sound?
Without a doubt, hitting the drums while the engineer is trying to mike the kit.

What should a drummer be thinking about in terms of tuning? Is it a matter of simply getting the best sound that his or her instrument can get? Or are there certain types of tuning that work better live?
The quality of the source is the most important thing. If it sounds like poo, you're gonna get poo. No expensive mic' or magic tube-in-a-box or line array sound system can make a neglected kit sound golden. But make the most of what you've got. So what if the drums are a bit beat-up? Take the time to put new heads on and tune them to get the best sound those drums can give. Ask fellow musicians and bandmates their opinions, and at the gig, ask the engineer what he thinks of the tones; he can probably give some good suggestions.

What about muffling? Should a drummer be prepared to tape up heads and put pillows in his bass drum to accommodate over-ring?
Absolutely—every room sounds different. Performance spaces have certain inherent audio characteristics that drum overtones don't always complement. If the engineer has noise gates available, that can be helpful. But ideally the problem should be taken care of at the source.

When you ask a drummer to play during soundcheck, what should he or she play—quarter notes, blazing fills...?
In a perfect world, there should be enough time to do a drum-by-drum check of the individual inputs. But in lieu of that, a steady kick-snare-hat beat with occasional tom and cymbal fills should be sufficient.

How about volume?
The drummer should play exactly like he or she plays, period. It makes no sense to be lightly tapping the drums during soundcheck, only to be pounding away at them during the show, or vice-versa: The drums will sound different. In some cases, usually in smaller spaces, the sheer volume of the kit can dictate how loud the other players in the band are, which affects the overall stage volume—including what is heard through the monitors.

How about communication with the engineer? How would you like a drummer to ask you for more or less of something in the monitors—through the PA? Hand signals?

I can't stress how important communication is. Most engineers are not mind-readers, although a good engineer has enough experience to intuit what certain players need in their monitors. A short chat before you sit down at the kit is a good idea, but if there's not enough time, he might just ask you from his talk-back mic' through the drum monitor. If you want to use hand signals, that's fine—just make sure it's a fairly universal signal (like pointing at a player, and giving an up or down signal with your finger).

Most engineers will appreciate an individual player-by-player soundcheck, as opposed to the whole band playing and everyone trying to yell out their monitor needs at the same time.

What about how the drums are set up? Should a drummer think in terms of there being mic's placed around his kit, so maybe cymbals should be a little higher and away from toms?

While there is no definitive right or wrong way to set up a kit, cymbal placement will affect where mic's can be placed. If you have an array of cymbals above and close to your toms, you can't expect an engineer to be able to fit mic's in. So it makes sense to get used to giving an engineer some space to work with.

What can a drummer realistically expect of his live sound? Should he or she expect the audience to hear all his little nuances and ghost strokes?

That depends on where in the music the nuances are. If it's a particularly loud song, some softer touches may get lost in room acoustics. If it's a quiet passage for all the players, then there is a much better chance for those nuances to be heard.

What can a drummer realistically expect in terms of a monitor mix?

As venues increase in size, so does production: If it's a small club, a drummer would be lucky to have a monitor for vocals. The next level might be a larger cabinet that can also handle reproducing some of the lower frequencies, like kick drum and bass guitar. If you're headlining a big stage, it's not unusual to have a separate subwoofer (or two), with a mid/hi pack (or two) on top—which, in the hands of a good engineer, is all you should need. If the drummer is running any kind of electronics, that should definitely be mentioned to the engineer, as it may affect what monitor cabinet(s) he gives you. Electronics tend to have fast digital transient signals, which can pop a speaker quickly.

How much time should a drummer expect to be able to take to get the drum sound right?

There is no rule here. Some engineers know the rig and the room well enough, and are experienced enough to be able to whip through a soundcheck in moments. Some may need more time; it could be five minutes or fifteen—there are too many variables. But if it's a multi-band bill, and there is only the time between bands to get it right, then you have to have faith. Communicate with the engineer as well as you can, but keep in mind that he may not be as worried about your ride cymbal tone as you are.

Should a drummer try to hear what the drums sound like out front, perhaps by having someone else play them while he or she stands by the sound board? Or is this unnecessary?

It's absolutely unnecessary. Someone else playing the kit will play it differently, thereby changing what the instrument sounds like. And quite often, having someone hang by the board during soundcheck will get nothing accomplished but irritating the engineer.

Assuming they're tuned adequately, do expensive drums always sound better than cheap ones?

Usually. It's like anything: You get what you pay for. You can't expect something cheaply made or mass-produced to sound as good as something handcrafted.

What about cymbals? Are bigger ones harder to control live, or is it just a matter of the drummer's ability?

Bigger ones can be harder to control, but it depends on who's hitting them, and how. It's definitely more a function of ability, combined with how that particular texture meshes with the music, and the room acoustics. On smaller stages especially, cymbal wash into the vocal mic's can make it a harder night for everyone—because all that cymbal wash is coming out of the monitors and P.A. too.

Finally: attitude. How do you like to be treated by musicians? Would it be wise for them to introduce themselves to you early in the night? What's the best and worst opening lines a drummer could say to you?

Treat the engineer with respect, as you would any other professional, regardless of any misgivings you may have about the engineer's abilities. If you yell and demand, that will earn a lot of scorn, perhaps a bad monitor mix, and not much else. Give respect, and get respect. If you have a stage plot and input list to give the engineer, all the better—that's that much more he'll know about what to expect.

As I mentioned earlier, communication is key. Let the engineer know you can give him info about your band, but the best time is definitely early, not later. By show time he's probably been working for hours without a break, and just might not have had time for dinner because the headliner's soundcheck went late—so timing can be key.

Best opening line: "Hi, I'm so-and-so from the band _____; anything you need to know about us?"

Worst opening line (ever!): "I play lead drums."

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Factory Metal Percussion recently unveiled four new percussion accessories intended to provide drummers and percussionists with unique sounds while delivering a stunning visual presence. Named for their unusual design and sound qualities, the Celtic Bell, Gothic Radius, Cross Benderz, and China Benderz provide a refreshing addition to a drummer or percussionist's repertoire.

Celtic Bells borrow their look from the Celtic cross and project a very pure metallic tone. Optional jingles create a tambourine-like shimmer for crisp accents. Celtic Bells are available in 8", 10", 12," and 15" inches.

The Gothic Radius is a large flat disk that provides the ping of glass supported by a dark, gothic tone. China Benderz and Cross Benderz represent a radical departure from conventional cymbals. Both products can be hand-bent by drummers to customize their own sound.

Factory Metal offers players a new world of percussive tone textures at prices ranging from $40 to $100. **(909) 314-9742, www.factorymetalpercussion.com.**

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A selection of clothing and drum accessories featuring the **CRAVIOTTO DRUM COMPANY**'s deluxe "Diamond" logo can now be purchased online at www.craviottodrums.com. Among the currently available items are T-shirts, camp shirts, and baseball hats, as well as logo stickers and Craviotto's popular plush, leather-look snare drum bags.

BERKLEE PRESS has released its 2004 catalog of instructional books and DVDs. It includes ten drum and percussion titles, along with reading and theory titles, plus a guide to working with Finale music-notation software. **(866) 237-5533, www.berkleepress.com.**

CARL FISCHER has released *Exercises For Natural Playing*, a book/CD package based on Dave Weckl's *Natural Evolution* DVD series. The book provides new exercises and concepts not covered in the DVDs, as well as material that is complementary to the series. Weckl provides insight into hand positioning, the Moeller technique, and bass drum pedal work, along with playing without losing time and the concepts of time and motion. **(800) 762-2328, www.carlfischer.com.**

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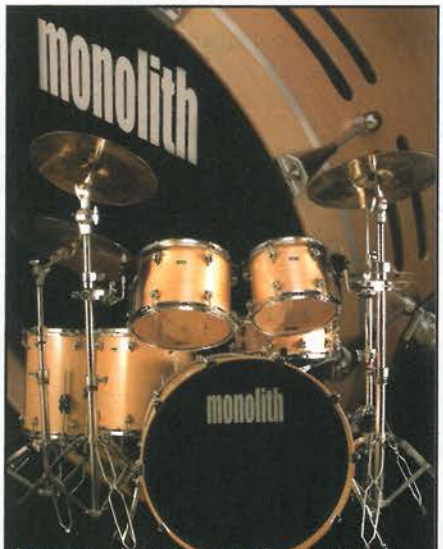

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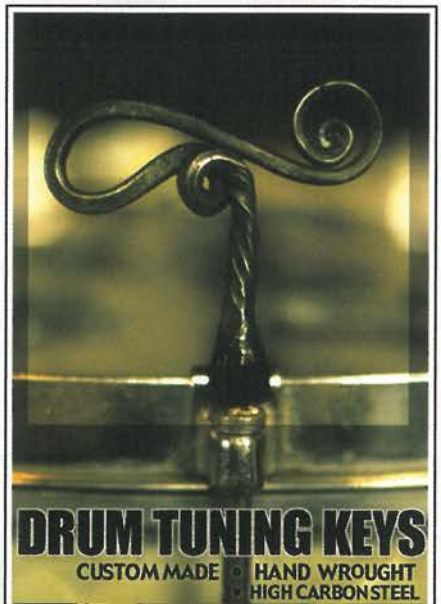

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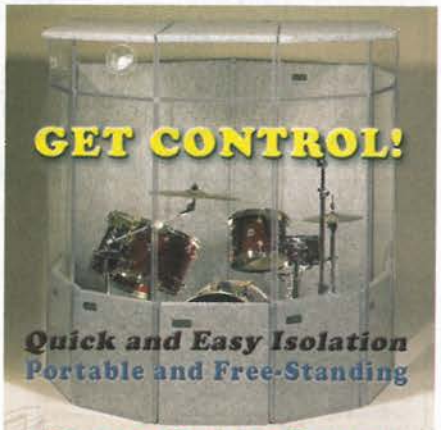

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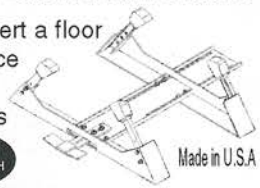

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Louis Vassallo

Louis Vassallo says his drumming career began in 1980, when he purchased a copy of *Modern Drummer* that featured Horacee Arnold on the cover. After learning that Arnold was teaching at Drummers Collective in New York City, Louis enrolled at the school, where he studied with Michael Shrieve, Kenwood Dennard, Bernard Purdie, and Michael Carvin.

Louis combined six-hour practice days with live and studio work in the NYC original-music scene. He expanded his studies to focus on linear drumming and hand development, working with Jonathan Mover and Joe Morello. This combination of rock and jazz influences helped Louis to develop a style that he describes as "something like John Bonham meets Art Blakey."

After college, Louis moved to Jacksonville, Florida, where he opened The Rhythm Technologies School Of Drumming ([904] 347-ROCK), teaching over forty students from five to sixty-eight years of age. With strong motivation as an educator, Louis has created a DVD called *Drums Of Passion*, along with an educational video that he says "documents the techniques I've been fortunate to learn from so many great drummers."

Louis has continued to perform live, appearing with such artists as Ace Frehley and members of Lynyrd Skynyrd and Molly Hatchett. He also plays with local groups including Beal St. Taxi and Better Dayz (a hard rock act with a self-produced CD to their credit). He performs on either a Yamaha Recording Custom kit or a Pearl GLX kit, with Paiste and Zildjian cymbals.

Brian Faulkner

Twenty-seven-year-old Brian Faulkner's passion for drumming has led him to become a dedicated student of music. Whether it's funk, jazz, Latin, R&B, or rock, the Chicago-based drummer applies this passion in order to create parts that enhance any composition.

Brian's drumming skills earned him the drum chair in the jazz ensemble at Southern Illinois University. He recorded a full-length album called *All Or Nothing At All* with that ensemble, paving the way for future recording activities. Brian also performed and recorded with groups such as Madcap and Dead Musician's Society (who were selected for *New Music Weekly*'s *Future Hits* compilation).

After working and recording with noted Chicago rock band Freefall, Brian started receiving calls for session work from performers like former MCA artist Kevin Lee. He has now devoted his time to session work and filling in for other bands when needed. He's also the house drummer at the Bamboo Room in Schaumburg, Illinois, and is involved in projects for Chicago artists Squai, Matt Fisher, and Jordan Macarus. (Go to www.brianfaulkner44.com for more information.)

Brian plays Premier drums, Zildjian cymbals, and LP percussion. His goal is to continue with session work and live performance, as well as venturing into theatrical musical performance and composing.

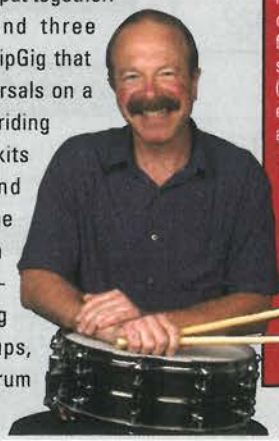
Lee Warner

Lee Warner has been playing the drums since the fourth grade, and he's been giving private drum lessons since high school. Lee currently plays in several bands in Reno, Nevada. He's a regular in some of these bands and a sub in the others, which he says gives him the opportunity to play "everything from oldies to classic rock 'n' roll, trio drumming to big-band jazz, and funk/R&B." His biggest influences are Buddy Rich and David Garibaldi.

Since 1989, Lee's primary band has been Papa Clutch & The Shifters, a 1950s act that's been going strong for many years. Lee's own eight-piece jazz group, The Radio Kings, has also had a run of local appearances for years. In addition, five local big bands frequently call on Lee's ability to swing. He feels equally at home playing classic rock in bar bands or cool jazz in a small combo. He also loves playing congas and timbales in blues bands.

Besides all his live playing, Lee teaches about forty private students at Maytan Music Center in downtown Reno. Last year, the shop sponsored a series of free concerts in local schools, featuring a ten-piece funk band with horns, which Lee put together.

Lee has two Pearl and three Yamaha kits, including a HipGig that he takes to gigs and rehearsals on a trailer that he tows while riding a bicycle. He outfits the kits with Zildjian, Sabian, and Paiste cymbals. His goal, he says, is simple: "To keep on doing what I'm doing—playing live and recording with lots of different groups, and teaching over 1,000 drum lessons a year."



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Little Feat

Kickin' It At The Barn (Hot Tomato)

"The Barn" is Little Feat's own homegrown studio, and its relaxed vibe reaps big benefits. Sounding "live" and organic again, Feat's signature feel is allowed to flourish. And **RICHIE HAYWARD** is its pillar. You'll hear fewer trademark complex linear patterns, but the "straighter" grooves still ooze that undeniably great feel. Check out Richie's nasty half-time pocket on "I Do What The Telephone Tells Me To Do." This is a strong, sunny batch of tunes. Following these sessions, Hayward departed for a red-carpet tour with Dylan. But it's clear from these tracks that home for Hayward is always with Feat. **Jeff Potter**

Local H

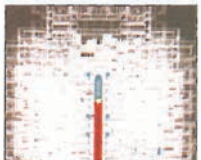
Whatever Happened To P.J. Soles? (Studio E)

Chicago's dynamic duo Local H, featuring **Scott Lucas** on vocals and guitar and powerhouse drummer **BRIAN ST. CLAIR**, are back with a new CD. St. Clair's energetic punk-rock drumming is right on target once again, as he displays clarity and force. Brian's playing is up front and in your face, and of course we drummers like that approach. Equally strong, however, is the songwriting, which betrays influences like Foo Fighters and The Offspring. Standout tracks include "Everyone Alive," "California Songs," "P.J. Soles," "Heaven's On The Way Down," and "Heavy Metal Bakesale." **Billy Amendola**

Paul Wertico StereoNucleosis (A440 Music)

A Grammy-winning Pat Metheny Group alumni and a master of drumming insanity, on *StereoNucleosis* **PAUL WERTICO** journeys through a curiously diverse instrumental collection that blurs the lines between happy, organic world music and dark King Crimson–esque adventurism. At times recalling the fragmented vignettes of the Bozzio/Mastelotto project, here Wertico uses a cornucopia of layered percussion to sculpt the well-recorded, earthy material. On the guitar-based pieces, Wertico's powerful, spirited grooves are mostly rock/funk-based. Musically (and drumistically) radical, artistic, and unpredictable stuff. (www.a440musicgroup.com) **Mike Haid**

Modern Groove Syndicate Vessel (Courthouse)



Despite being saddled with an artificially lofty band name, Modern Groove Syndicate delivers an economical instrumental funk that (with guest horns straight out of the Tower Of Power school) emphasizes the music over the individuals, while still allowing for the ensemble to stretch convincingly into jungle and hip-bop realms. Fat, acoustic sounds mix deliciously with techno grooves on "My Action," and a distorted organ sound on "Gerbils For Pets" threatens your speakers' well being. There's something slightly off-center here, and it works. *Vessel* is harmonically and rhythmically playful, and **JOEL DENUNZIO**'s drums are generously mixed. (www.moderngroovesyndicate.com) **Robin Tolleson**

Robert Miles & Trilok Gurtu

Miles_Gurtu (EMI)

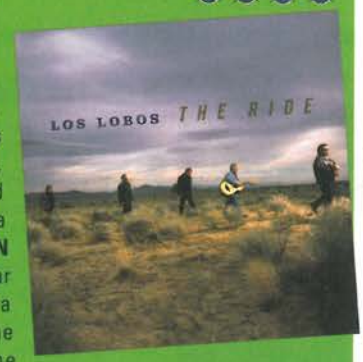
This unusual collaboration between electronic music artist **Robert Miles** and master tabla-ist and drummer **TRILOK GURTU** is both genre-expanding and familiar. It begins with a swing dissertation, Gurtu wailing on brushes and some exaggerated left-hand stickings, but eventually recalls '70s prog ("Tragedy : Comedy"), freak percussion soundscapes ("Loom"), and drum 'n' bass danger ("The Big Picture"). That initial fiery drumming leaves one hoping for more natural swing, but *Miles_Gurtu* refuses to go that easily, the percussionist's dancing fingers often recast in alien effects and computer treatments. Though this collection is more synthetic than organic, Gurtu injects serious groove in the cracks. **Ken Micallef**

Significant Reissues by Ken Micallef

Dave Brubeck

The five-CD set *For All Time* by The Dave Brubeck Quartet contains the best of the groundbreaking jazz group featuring the mighty **JOE MORELLO** on drums. Titles include the million-selling *Time Out*, which spawned the most famous odd-meter single ever, "Take Five," and the dazzling "Blue Rondo A La Turk." Building on that theme, *Time In*, *Countdown: Time In Outer Space*, *Time Further Out*, and *Time Changes* complete the overworked "time" topic. Though occasionally clinical and ultra-clean, Morello is stunning throughout, his technical mastery equaled by his musicality and overwhelming sense of flow, reflected in his logical and supremely compositional solo on "Take Five." But Joe has many inspired tricks up his sleeve, such as the tumbling timpani call & response of "Countdown," the funky architecture of "Far More Drums," the fake-out brushwork in "World's Fair," and the 7/4 rollercoaster of "Unsquare Dance," a duel of dancing rim figures that is ingenious and amusing. (Sony Legacy)

Los Lobos The Ride (Hollywood)



Celebrating their thirtieth anniversary with *The Ride*, East LA roots-mixers Los Lobos invite stellar guests on tunes old and new. The result is a deep-grooved joy. Contributions from **Café Tacuba**, **Elvis Costello**, **Bobby Womack**, **Ruben Blades**, **Dave Alvin**, and others are all heart, and "Someday," sung by **Mavis Staple**, is a killer. Relative newcomer drummer **RUBEN "COUGAR" ESTRADA** lays it down. Cougar employs flashier chops with The Estrada Brothers, but in this seat he socks in the swampy elemental grooves with stone authority. And on tracks like "Is This All There Is?" Cougar gets trickier with a nod to Clyde Stubblefield. It's a sweet ride. **Jeff Potter**

Snow Patrol Final Straw (A&M)

It's rare to spot rock acts effectively making use of dynamics. But Glasgow's Snow Patrol doesn't just use dynamics, the quartet practically lives for the stomping of the overdrive pedal, centering their album on the ability to seamlessly shift into high gear. Even when tracks don't require a boost, **JOHNNY QUINN** always lays down sure-footed stickwork, like the carefully paced four-beat drive of "Chocolate." Still, Quinn's at his best when he's widening the sonic range (and, sometimes, rage) of songs like "Whatever's Left" or the Coldplay-esque "Run." *Final Straw* is a fine example of well-balanced, even-tempered rock drumming. **Waleed Rashidi**

Jucifer War Bird (Velocette)

Despite its two-person lineup, Jucifer isn't a band known for doing things on a small scale. Okay, most of their 69-minute *War Bird* EP is taken up by a hidden "field" recording of Georgia crickets. But you don't need a stopwatch to gauge the monstrous guitar riffs of **Amber Valentine** or the huge sound and gleefully human fills of drummer **ED LIVENGOOD**. It takes a certain personality to bruise the drums the way Livengood does without sounding dull, but he pulls it off. For those to whom the description "plodding" ain't necessarily a bad thing (that's you, Melvins/Sabbath fans), Jucifer = cool. **Adam Budofsky**

Lola Ray I Don't Know You (DC Flag/Red Ink)

Lola Ray's brand of punk-pop-rock is loaded with catchy harmonies built on a no-nonsense foundation. Drummer **ALEX SMOLINSKI** keeps things solid with a straightforward style that supports their songs from the ground up. The band's rhythm guitars contrast and complement his playing, first with a great melody, and then by just plain rocking along. Check out the opening tune, "Plague," where Smolinsky smoothly transitions to a half-time feel, highlighting the chorus. He also sets up the sections effectively on the slower "Charlit Movie Star." A solid debut album with plenty of strong songwriting and playing. **Martin Patmos**

Tesla Into The Now (Sanctuary)

"Into The Now" is indeed the mantra of Tesla, who caught attention in the late '80s with their mildly progressive hard rock, and who spent more than two years producing this project. Though drummer **TROY LUCCKETTA** gets into some rhythmic interplay with the guitars, there is no trickery here. Troy acts more like the athletic backbone, tossing out adrenalized toms and a punchy kick drum to bring the band to the chorus. Tesla followers should not be disappointed with this release. But if Luccketta's declaration "We are a live band" is true, then I would go to the show to experience the new material. **Sean Enright**

Frank Gambale Raíson D'être (Wombat)

Those familiar with the groundbreaking drumming of jazz/rock fusion master **BILLY COBHAM** with The Mahavishnu Orchestra will appreciate the efforts of guitar whiz **Frank Gambale** to recreate a similar compositional energy on this instrumental release. The material falls short of Mahavishnu's innovative catalog, but Cobham's technically tireless drumming and funky grooves within this stretching format confirm that the master hasn't lost his fiery touch or his enthusiasm for the trademark style of drumming he created over thirty years ago. (www.frankgambale.com) **Mike Haid**

Christiansen
Stylish Nihilists (Revelation)

Just a few measures into the roaring album opener, "Kentucky Goddamn," and you'll instantly bear witness to punk percussionist **TERRY CAMPBELL**'s masterful stickwork. The impenetrable drummer is all over the map on Christiansen's latest, furiously shifting gears between laying concrete passages (like the Taylor Hawkins-esque kick/snare patterns of "Under Things Killed"), providing subtle yet defined accented kicks (feel the mellow, Rush groove of "Cocaine Summer"), or waging all-out war on the kit, found in brief spurts throughout *Stylish Nihilists*. File it right next to genre greats At The Drive-In and Burning Airlines, but yank it out often, particularly for those spirited air-drumming sessions. **Waleed Rashidi**

Steve Weingart Life Times (independent)

Dave Weckl Band keyboardist Steve Weingart does much of the writing for Weckl's band, which Weingart's instrumental solo CD stylistically recalls. Solid funky grooves provided by drummer **CHAD WRIGHT** are in the pocket, with sparse fills that allow Wright's impressive technique to sneak through occasionally. Tasty contempo jazz. (www.steveweingart.com) **Mike Haid**

Indie Swingin' by Jeff Potter

A recent crop of drummer-led, self-produced indies confirms that dynamic jazz drumming is booming across the US. From the Denver area comes the promising seventeen-year-old **COLIN STRANAHAN** on *Dreams Untold*. Showing chops and confidence far exceeding his years, Stranahan unleashes swinging kit work in a quintet also featuring two (aged nineteen) elders. Popping! (www.caprirecords.com)

From Chicago comes **TED SIROTA's** Rebel Souls with *Breeding Resistance*. Sirota's muscular wave of earthy drumming drives a bold quintet, mixing straight-ahead and the rawness of '60s free-jazz with a political message. Gutsy! (www.delmark.com)

From New York, ***SCOTT NEUMANN*** *And Osage County* is the debut by a drummer long deserving of wider attention. A natural recording sound captures his quartet fluidly phrasing over snaky, mysterious bass riffs. Neumann's authoritative drumming unfolds gradually, building compositional tension. Cool! (www.cdbaby.com)

From Charlottesville, Virginia, **ROBERT JOSPÉ** And His Inner Rhythm showcase a polished, jubilant mix of straight-ahead, Latin, and funk on *Hands On*. Jospé's crisp, tight grooves seamlessly merge styles. Hot! (www.randomchance.com)

DVDs

Buddy Rich & The Buddy Rich Big Band

Live At The 1982 Montreal Jazz Festival (Hudson Music)

level: all, $29.95

BUDDY RICH and his band played a stellar set during their spot at Montreal's Jazz Festival back in 1982. What makes this set great is tight ensemble playing on varied song selections, all fueled by Buddy's fiery timekeeping and solo breaks. After opening with a swinging shuffle, the band eases back for "Brush Strokes" featuring Rich with, of course, brushes. A modern chart by Bob Mintzer and the classic Rich treatment of "West Side Story" further demonstrate Buddy's swing and astounding technique. And then there's this jaw-dropping solo where he doesn't use any drums, instead playing hi-hat, cymbals, snare rim, and even his drumsticks like nobody else. Simply, this DVD/audio CD set shows Buddy Rich and his band at their best. **Martin Patmos**

Learn Basic Drums (Warner Bros.)

level: beginner, $16.95 (with 46-page booklet)

When our confused young drummer Ben has trouble setting up his new kit, his cries for help magically produce Harry Edward Lionus Pleasington (H.E.L.P.) and the fictional rock star George (whose picture was hanging on Ben's wall). With their...ah...help, Ben and the viewer are introduced to such important concepts as finger grip, sticking patterns, basic drum notation, cymbal placement, and "finding the beat." The journey doesn't end there. Special features include 24 basic rhythmic exercises, play-along audio tracks, an intro to music theory, and a listener's guide to key artists in different genres and their landmark recordings. Printable PDF files (a practice schedule and a crossword puzzle among them), MP3s, and a crash course in tom fills can be found in the DVD-ROM section. By serving up practical, bite-sized information, this video is geared for knowledge-hungry and attention span–challenged youngsters alike. **Will Romano**

BOOKS

Brushworks

by Clayton Cameron (Carl Fischer)

level: beginner to advanced, $24.95 (with CD)

Clayton Cameron is recognized as a modern brush master through his drumming with top jazz and pop artists, most visibly in his ten-year stint with Tony Bennett. Clayton's outstanding new book offers smart, clearly presented illustrations of brush strokes beat-by-beat and applies them to practical patterns. From basic whole-note legato sweeps to the tricky "flex-roll," Cameron provides handy control exercises, grooves, and concise CD cuts to help you tackle your goal. A nice touch at the end is the series of short transcriptions of characteristic brush patterns of famous jazz drummers. Cool trivia: Tony B. himself painted Cameron's cover portrait! **Jeff Potter**

It's About Time by Fred Dinkins (Warner Bros.)

level: intermediate, $24.95 (with 2 CDs)

By providing scads of play-along exercises (some with click tracks that drop out for whole measures at a clip), Dinkins helps us to internalize beats and focus on the "fifth limb"—our vocal cords. Getting us to vocalize rhythms is certainly not a new technique, but it's certainly an effective one for thinking and playing in time. Still, Dinkins isn't all talk. This book also offers ways to maintain a tune's tempo from count-off to finish (a common problem for some drummers), nail accents played in unison with the band (a.k.a. "playing the hits"), and perform fills without derailing a groove. Exposure to, or a reexamination of, these concepts should augment your normal practice or pre-gig warm-up regimen. As a bonus, Disc 2 features **DENNIS CHAMBERS**, **DOANE PERRY**, **HARVEY MASON**, and others interpreting Dinkins' composition "Time Maze." **Will Romano**

Snare Drum Solos by Sperie Karas (Hal Leonard)

level: intermediate to advanced, $5.95

Snare Drum Solos collects seven solo snare drum pieces that would make nice additions to a lesson. They are suitable for recital or competition as well. Covering 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 6/8 time signatures, each piece has a different feel to it, with some played straight and others with a jazz feel. Drawing on the rudiments, there are plenty of flams, ruffs, rolls, and ratamacues mixed among the sticking patterns to keep things challenging. What is especially fun about this book is the series of accent patterns running throughout the pieces. Perfect for the high-intermediate to advanced player, Karas's book provides material that balances fun with a fresh challenge. **Martin Patmos**

Snare Drum Plays The Zoo

by Brian Harris (independent)

level: beginner, $29.95

Aimed at the elementary-age level, *Snare Drum Plays The Zoo* is an introductory book with a unique approach. Drawing on years of teaching young students, Harris's strategy parallels how we learn to speak, by first hearing something, then saying and reading it. By matching animal names to rhythms, such as "caterpillar tiger" (1e&a 2 &), this approach keeps learning fun and focused. After discussing the snare drum, sticks, and tuning, the book gradually introduces basic rhythms, sticking, accents, rolls, and flams. A notable feature found throughout is blank staff space at the end of each section, where students can compose their own pieces. Lots of illustrations, a logical progression, and a clear presentation make this book a great resource for beginning students and their teachers. (www.brianjharris.com) **Martin Patmos**

To hear many of the artists reviewed in this month's *Critique*, be sure to tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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THE MODERN DRUMMER FESTIVAL WEEKEND 2003 DVD

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Steve Smith
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Matt Wilson
Matt Wilson Quartet

Nathaniel Townsley
Nathaniel Townsley Trio

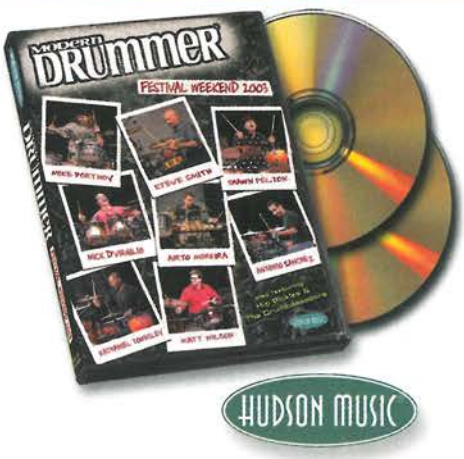
SUNDAY • Disc Two

Shawn Pelton
House Of Diablo

Airto Moreira

Antonio Sanchez

Nick D'Virgilio



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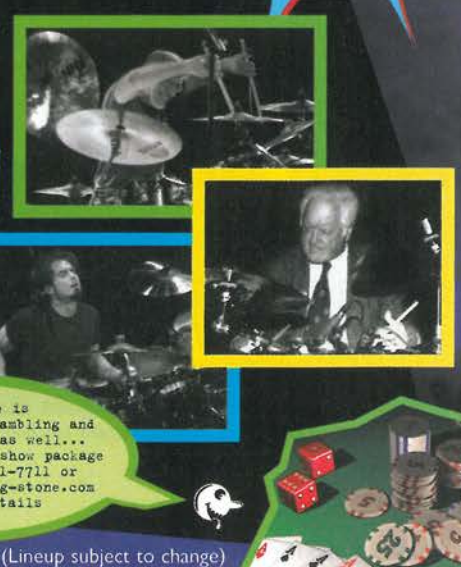


An Evening With Louie Bellson

This past March 17, many New York City drummers—pro, amateur, and student alike—gathered at Drummers Collective to spend "An Evening With Louie Bellson." The gathering was held in celebration of Louie's eightieth birthday in July of this year.

After a brief introduction by Collective director John Castellano, tributes were offered by veteran drummer/teachers **Sam Ulano** and **Russ Moy**. A video program featuring film and television clips of Louie's stellar career followed, presented by Louie's wife Francine. She went on to explain how Louie's hometown—Rock Falls, Illinois—had placed a commemorative marker last year at the house where Louie was born. The town plans a major event this year (July 9–11) in celebration of Louie's birthday.

When Louie was introduced by Zildjian's John DeChristopher, he began his own presentation by saluting the drummers that he admired, like Jo Jones, Sid Catlett, and Chick Webb, along with contemporary greats like Steve Gadd and John Riley. Then he delivered a mini-clinic, first on snare drum with brushes, and then on his signature double bass kit. He focused on the idea of starting with time and groove, and developing a solo structure from there. Louie's playing demonstrated that he has as much enthusiasm for the drums today as at any point in his life.

During a Q&A session that followed, Louie mentioned that Verve records will shortly reissue a recording called *Soul On Top*, which Louie made with James Brown (!) and a full orchestra over eighteen years ago. R&B drumming great **Charley Drayton** (who was in the audience) mentioned that he had a copy of the original record, and that "Louie was swinging and burning" on it.

Other notable drummers who came to salute Louie included **Anton Fig**, **John Riley**, **Billy Ward**, **Shawn Pelton**, **Mike Clark**, and **Memo Acevedo**. The event was coordinated by The Collective's John Castellano and Anthony Citrinite, along with founders Rob Wallis and Paul Siegel, who presented Louie with a plaque in recognition of his "years of friendship and inspiration." Support was also provided by John DeChristopher and John King of Zildjian Cymbals, who presented Louie with a commemorative cymbal in honor of the occasion.

From left: Paul Siegel, Louie, John Castellano, and Rob Wallis

John DeChristopher, Louie, and John King

International Drummers For Jesus Celebration

The International Drummers For Jesus Celebration was held this past March 12–13 in Rockwall, Texas. The event was the brainchild of Carlos Benson, who drums in the praise & worship team at the city's Lakepointe Church. For those unfamiliar with such facilities, the church is larger than many arenas. Attendance at the Celebration was measured in the thousands.

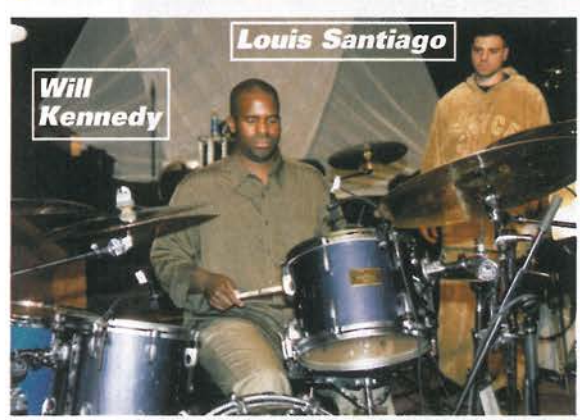
Not your typical drum clinic or festival, the focus here was clearly on worship, and the outstanding drummers and percussionists were using their gifts in support of their faith. But they all still came to *play*. And play they did.

The event kicked off with a concert that featured a house band of stellar musicians. Several of the tunes were written by Carlos Benson specifically for the individual drummers performing them. After playing, the drummers came out from behind the kit and shared a little of themselves, allowing us to see them in a more intimate way.

The concert began with **Paul Leim** on drums, **Luis Conte** on congas, and drum & bugle corps instructor **Bill Bachman** on the quads, performing with vocalists from the praise & worship team of Lakepointe Church. Paul took immediate command of this hard-driving rock tune, while Bill demonstrated why he is in demand as an instructor by playing a variety of cross-sticking patterns. Their playing on this spirited composition laid the foundation for what was to come.

Alex Acuña opened his performance with a cajon solo, then moved to the kit to play a syncopated Latin jazz number that came out of the gate *burning*. Luis Conte (on congas) and **Sheila E** (on timbales) added fuel to that fire with blistering solos that captivated the crowd.

Marvin McQuitty—currently on tour with Vickie Winans—dug a deep pocket on



his first tune. Then he played delicately on a sweet arrangement of "I Need You Now" by Smokie Norful.

Louis Santiago Jr. handled his tune with precision and maturity. During his solo, he wove his way effortlessly through different grooves. Then, while comping with his left foot on *two* pedals (tambourine and jamblock), he turned his snare upside down and played a hip-hop groove, using the snares to simulate a DJ scratching.

Swinging hard and fast, accenting and punctuating with snare and cymbal stabs, **Will Kennedy** made it all look easy as he breezed around the kit. After soloing on "Cherokee," Will got funky on the R&B classic "It's Your Thing." He even sang, changing the lyrics to the delight of the crowd.

Sheila E backed the other drummers on percussion until it was her turn to take the spotlight. She was going to play the drumkit, but was moved to sing instead, offering a poignant and worshipful ballad that touched the audience.

Kirk Whalum's **Sean McCurley** opened with a free-form solo that danced around

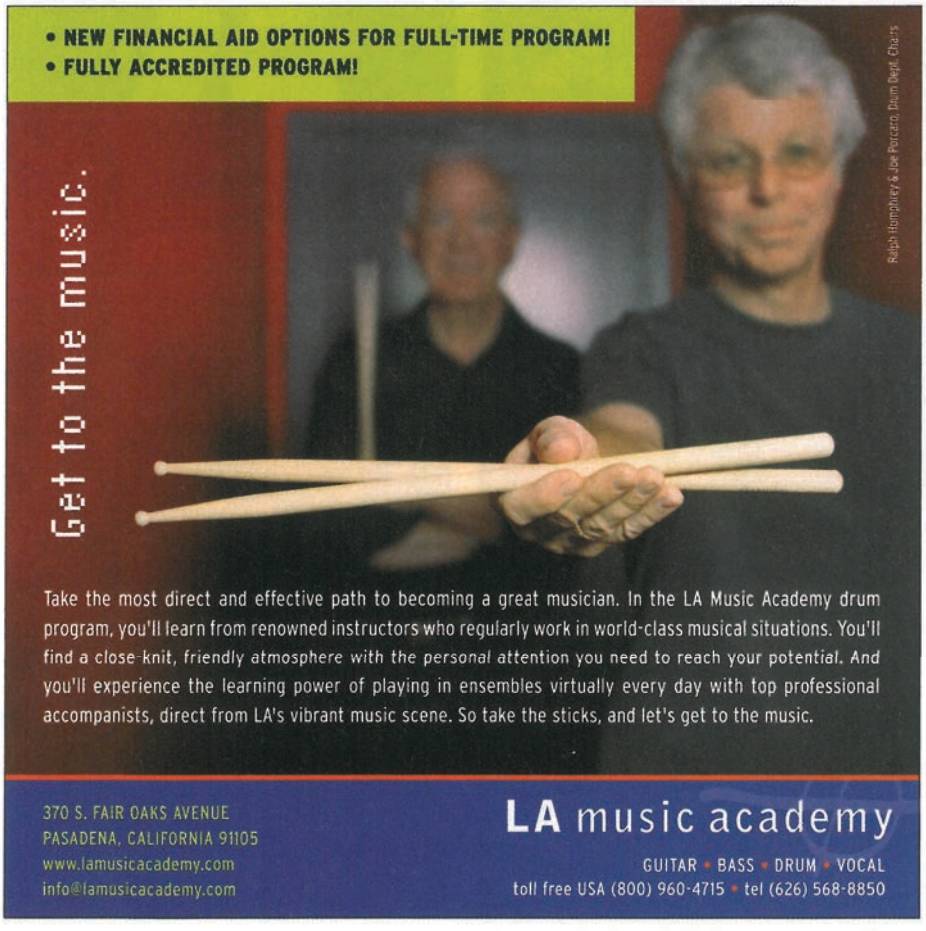
the time, but established the pulse throughout. Sean also demonstrated tasty hi-hat work and a solid groove on Whalum's "El Todopoderosa—The All Powerful One," which also featured Luis Conte.

Vinnie Colaiuta played a blistering solo over a sequenced track. Then the house band and the worship team joined in with an appropriately titled chorus of "Gonna Get My Praise On!" The evening ended with all of the artists onstage for the finale.

Day two focused more on the technical side of playing drums. Educator **Bart Elliott** discussed the role of the drummer in a band—especially working with leaders. **Carl Albrecht** (with over seventy-five Integrity Music recordings to his credit) covered tuning, sound, and groove. The tranquil **Terl Bryant** focused on a few spiritual aspects, and injected his London humor. **Alvaro Lopez** (Luis Miguel, Res-Q Band) performed a truly amazing solo, after which he exhorted Christian drummers to play not just to entertain, but also to heal and to deliver.

The seminar closed out with an informal Q&A session and prayer. Drummers young and old were moved by the experience. This will be an annual event, so don't miss the next one. For more info, check www.drummersforjesus.com

Story and photos by Rodney Harrison Sr.



NARAS Party

Recording engineer Dennis Ferrante, who is one of the governors on the board of the New York chapter of The Recording Academy, along with fellow governor/Bad Company drummer **Simon Kirke** and producer Tony Visconti, were on hand for a party thrown for Jon Marcus, who is retiring from his post as the New York executive director of NARAS. The party, which went down this past April 1 at New York City's Cutting Room, was orchestrated by board member Norman Chesky and featured music by the Smithereens' **Dennis Diken** and friends. Kirke, **Louie Appel,** and **Matt Amendola** sat in on drums for a few tunes each.

From left: Louie Appel, Dennis Diken, and Simon Kirke.

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Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival

The Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival is always interesting for the drummers in the audience. The event's late namesake always made sure that the drummers at his Festival were the best. Current executive director Lynn Skinner brought some of the finest in the business to this year's show, held February 25–28 at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho.

The Festival's house band backed artists such as Dee Daniels, Igor Butman, Lorraine Feather, and Roberta Gambarini. That band included Benny Green on piano, Russell Malone on guitar, John Clayton on bass, and **Jeff Hamilton** on drums. Listening to Jeff play every night, you'd never have known that he was backing dozens of musicians over a four-night stint.

Hamilton's skill and technique demanded respect all week. He was also the showman among all the drummers who performed. He would occasionally throw in some classic big band flare, possibly picked up during his tenure with The Lionel Hampton Big Band. But it was Jeff's playing *out* of the spotlight that was most impressive. For instance, his brushwork on ballads yielded only the sound of a quiet stir, as he gave support to an artist but stayed out of the way. It was obvious that Hamilton—a player with more chops than a meat market—knows how to hold back and help performers do their best.

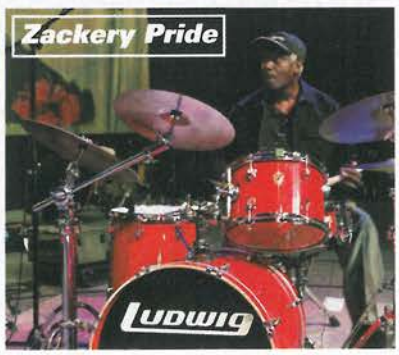
The Roy Hargrove Quintet played a different kind of jazz than was seen the rest of the week, and drummer **Willie Jones III** played a different kind of drums. Complementing the young, edgy players in the quintet, Jones' drumming was full of kicks and high-energy solos—much to the pleasure of the audience. The band never took a break between charts; as soon as they finished one tune they were already starting the next.

As the drummer for The Lionel Hampton Big Band, **Wally "Gator" Watson** has become a favorite among the show's audience. Watson backed winning student performers during evening concerts, then closed the Festival with the Hampton Band on Saturday night.

Jane Monheit's band featured **Rich Montalbano** on drums. His familiarity with the other players in the band was obvious, and he proved to be the perfect complement to Monheit's sultry set. This isn't surprising, since the two have known each other since they met at the Manhattan School of Music in the late 1990s, and are now married.

Also drumming at the Festival were **Bob Ferreira** of The Four Freshman, **Zackery Pride** of The Freddy Cole Quartet, and **Brian Wright**, who backed pianist Jim Martinez. Next year's Festival will be held February 23–26. For more information, visit www.jazz.uidaho.edu.

Story and photos by Chris Kornelis



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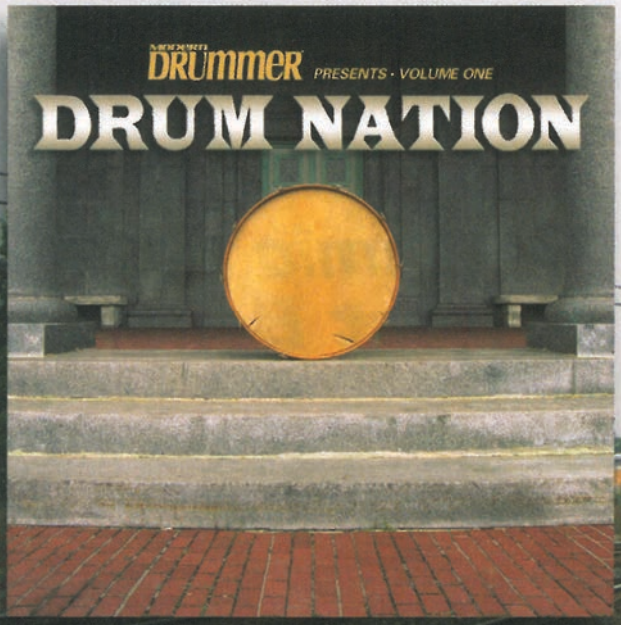

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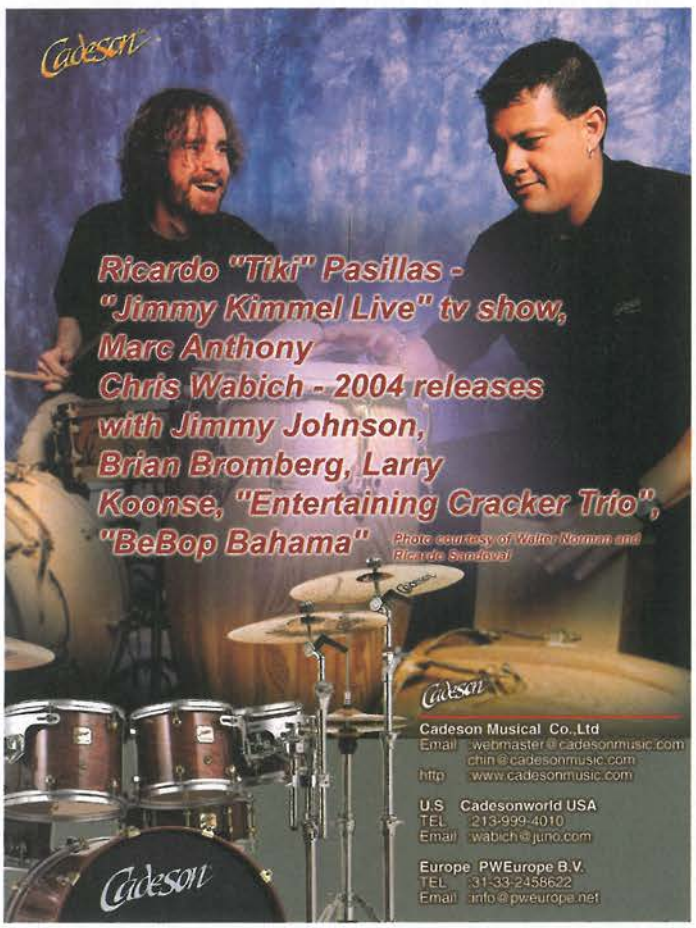
Zildjian Artist Session

Zildjian held its first Artist Session in London this past February 27. Following the success of Artist Sessions held in Los Angeles and New York City since 2002, Zildjian continued with its theme of showing its newest cymbal introductions to their artists in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

The Session—held at John Henry's rehearsal facility—attracted nearly one hundred Zildjian artists and industry friends. Artists in attendance included Steve White, Andy Newmark, Mark Mondesir, Andy Gangadeen, Preston Heyman, Blair Cunningham, Mark Brzezicki, Paul Kodish, Frank Tontoh, Ian Thomas, Brett Sawmy, Steve Alexander, Andrew Small, Simon Hanson, Gavin Harrison, Danny Cummings, Fergus Gerrand, Carlos Hercules, Johnny Kalsi, Pete Lewinson, Pete Lockett, Lea Mullen, Billy Osbourne, Ash Soan, Chris Whitten, Louie Palmer, and Dave De Rose.

Zildjian representatives included: John DeChristopher (director of artist relations & event marketing worldwide), Bob Wiczling (international marketing manager), Tina Clarke (international artist relations manager), and Rab Zildjian (director).



Rhythmic Arts Project Benefit

The Rhythmic Arts Project (TRAP) will hold a summer benefit show on July 11 from 3:00 P.M. until 9:00 P.M. at Girls Inc. on Foothill Boulevard in Carpinteria, California. The organization supports young people with developmental disabilities.

The event will begin with a community drum circle led by Kalani. The show will continue with Airto Moreira, followed by Drum Talk (featuring Ralph Humphrey, Joe Porcaro, Mike Shapiro, Marty Fera, Luis Conte, Richie Garcia, and Walfredo Reyes Sr.) Many young people from TRAP classes in Ojai, Pasadena, and Carpinteria will be featured throughout the day. Trieana Moon, Brian Vinson, and Meghan Finn of Gifted Artists Records will perform, along with Perla Batalla, drummer Burleigh Drummond's band Tin Drum, and Kevyn Lettau with a host of great players. Tickets are $20. For more information contact Eddie Tuduri at (805) 745-8280.

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Who's Using What

New Zildjian cymbal artists include **Dave King** (The Bad Plus), **Tucker Rule** (Thursday), **Francisco Duenas** (independent), **Dave Chavarri** (Ill Nino), **Fofi Lancha** (*Sabado Gigante*), **Ron Savage** and **Bob Kaufman** (Berklee College of Music), **Bruce Aitkin** (Canadian educator), and **Steve Holmes** (educator/freelance artist).

Chad Sexton (311) is endorsing Zildjian drumsticks, while **Atom Willard** (The Offspring) is using the company's sticks and cymbals.

Vinnie Paul (Damageplan) and **Mike McIntosh** (percussion designer/arranger, Bluecoats drum & bugle corps) are new Evans drumhead endorsers.

Drummers now playing Vic Firth sticks include **Jon Theodore** (The Mars Volta), **Tris Imboden** (Chicago), **Keith Harris** (Black Eyed Peas), **Clown** and **Chris 3** (Slipknot), **Craig MacIntyre** (Josh Groban), **Joey Castillo** (Queens Of The Stone Age), **Scott Coogan** (Brides Of Destruction), **Corey Pierce** (God Forbid), **Kevin Franks** (Silvertide), **Rexsell Hardy** (Mary J. Blige), **Fausto Cuevas** (Britney Spears), **Steve Sidelnyk** (Madonna), **Cliff Almond** (Michel Camilo), **Steve Gorman** (Stereophonics), **Ryan Dusick** (Maroon 5), **Ed Graham** (The Darkness), **Mackie** (Hazen Street), and **Jess Margera** (CKY).

John Boecklin (DevilDriver), **Brann Dailor** (Mastodon), **Michael Duffy** (Ozomatli), and **Louis Santiago Jr.** (independent) are new Meinl cymbal artists.

Wally "Gator" Watson (Chaka Khan, Lionel Hampton Orchestra) is an artist-endorser for the Duallist drum pedal.

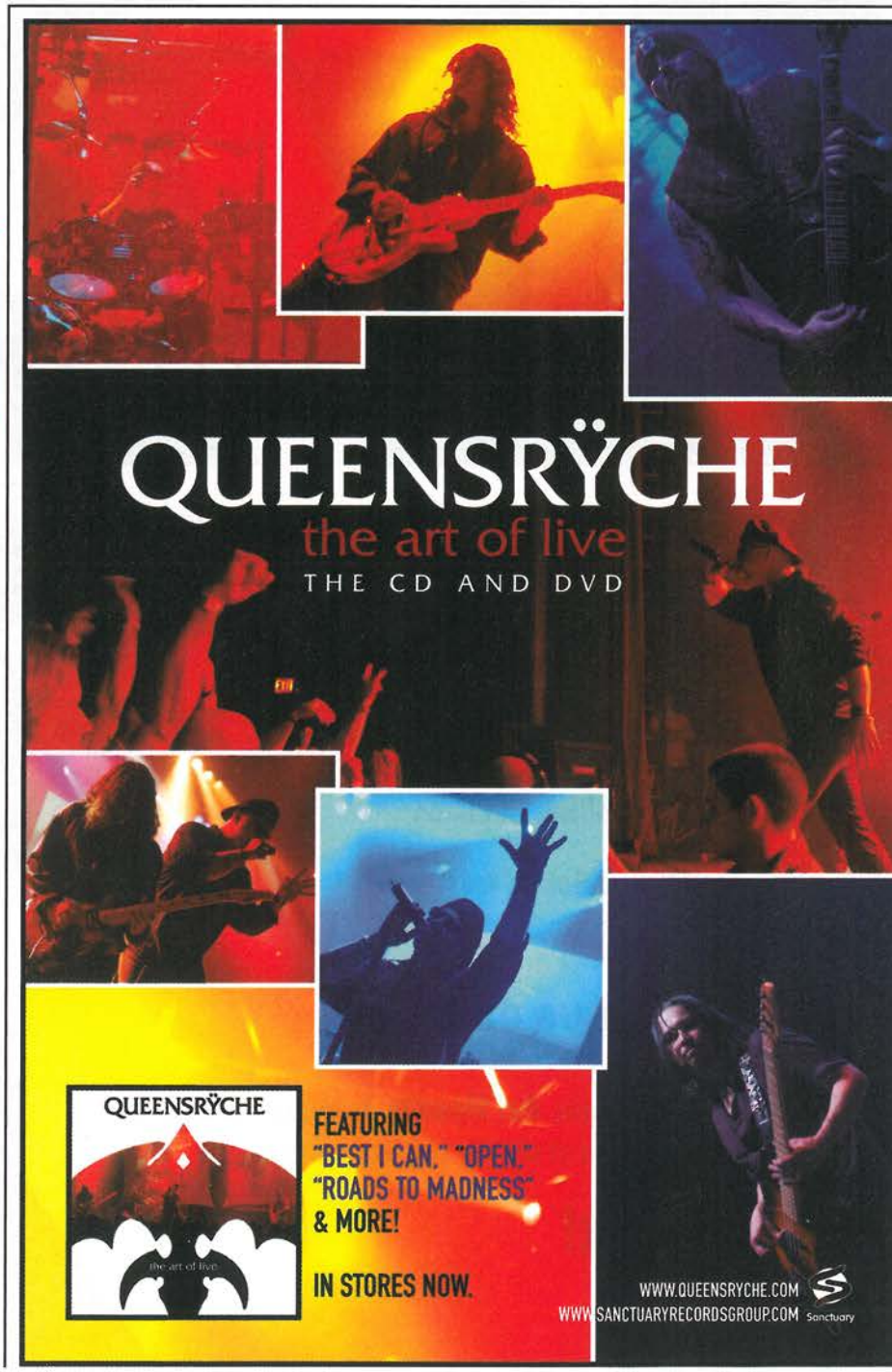
Quick Beats

Grant Collins
(Australian Master)

What are some of your favorite grooves?
Tommy Lee on "Dr. Feelgood" (Mötley Crüe), Mike Portnoy on "6:00" (Dream Theater), and anything with Marvin "Smitty" Smith.

If you could put together an imaginary superband, who would be in it?
Steve Vai on guitar, Victor Wooten on bass, Jim Beard on keyboards, Alex Acuña on percussion, and I'd have to put *my* hand up to play drums in a band like that!

What song makes you say, "I wish I played on that one"?
"Jack & Diane" by John Cougar Mellencamp with Kenny Aronoff on drums. Totally original playing, and that drum break is a one of a kind.



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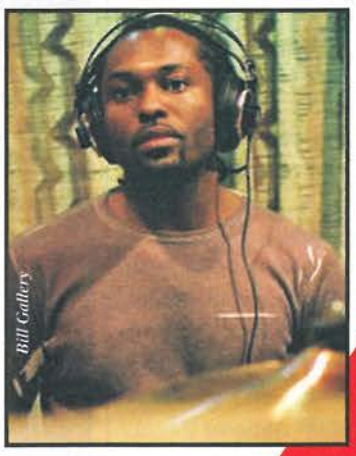

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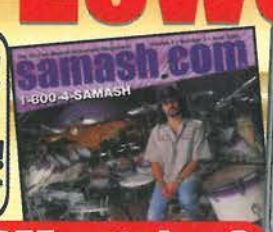

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